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FEBRUARY 11, 2008

# The American Conservative

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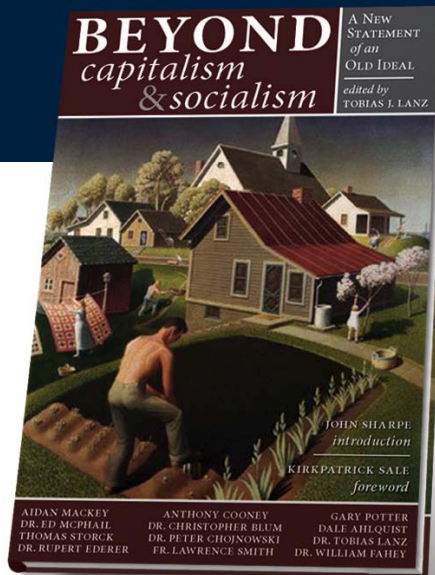
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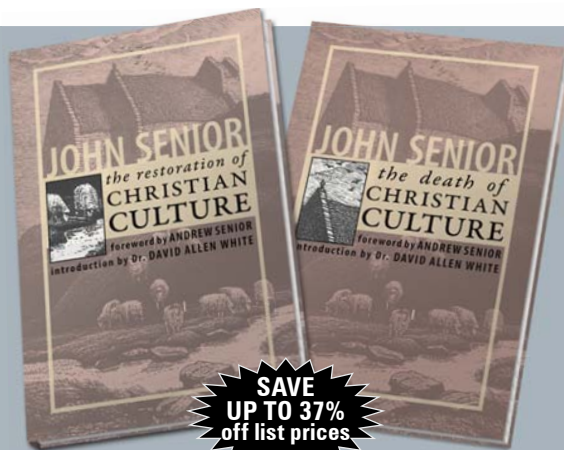
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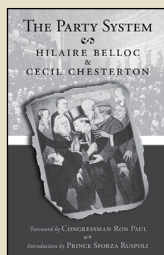
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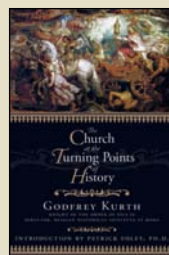


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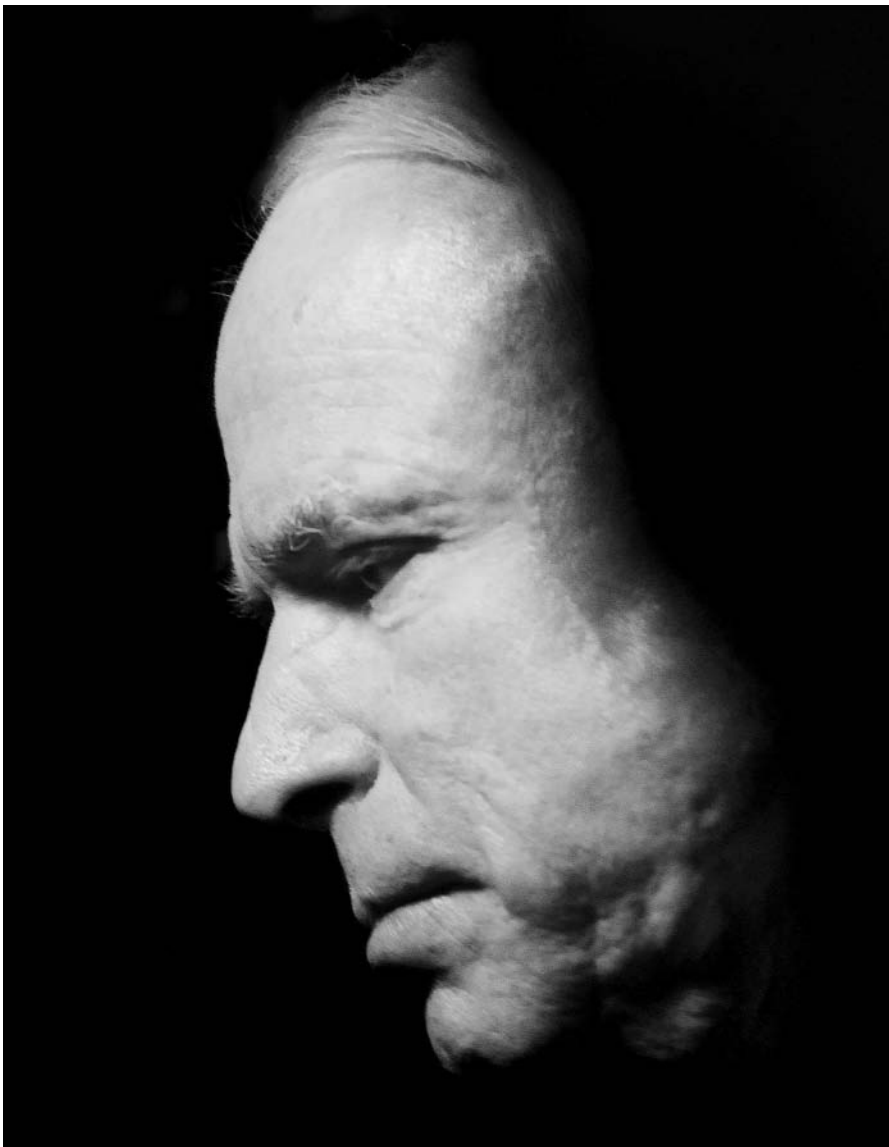
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[COVER]

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[ENDORSEMENT]

## PAUL FOR PRESIDENT

The presidential fields of both parties have narrowed, and the arguments about how we should move forward are now familiar. *TAC* believes that only one candidate has put forth a diagnosis of America's current ills and has a vision to turn the country off its misguided course. That is Congressman Ron Paul, whom we endorse for the Republican nomination.

On the key issue of foreign policy, the differences between the other Republican contenders can be measured in microdots. All remain enthusiastic supporters of the invasion of Iraq and of maintaining a presence there for years to come. All speak as if it is America's right and duty to station its armed forces over much of the world. All have embraced neoconservative paranoia about the "threat" posed by Iran, setting the table for another war. All, that is, except Dr. Paul.

He is the one candidate who sees how the realities of world power have shifted since the 1990s, the one who recognizes that the time of unilateral American hegemony is over—and can't be maintained even if it was in our interest to do so. He alone understands that the ever expanding federal government is a far greater threat to American liberty than some tinpot dictator in the Caucasus. By speaking about the benefits of smaller government and limited executive power, he has introduced a generation of young Americans to a more traditional and true style of conservatism—to the movement and the country's benefit.

Ron Paul is a libertarian, and his stances are very much derived from that minor party tradition. To many, his ruminations about sound money seem academic—if oddly prescient. He was sounding the alarm about dollar devaluation long before the current panic and



broke with libertarian orthodoxy to oppose injurious free-trade deals like NAFTA and CAFTA. Conservatives also find common cause with his 30-year pro-life voting record and commitment to ending birthright citizenship.

Paul came by his congressional nickname—"Dr. No"—honestly. Anyone combing through his lengthy record will find many lone stands and idealistic statements that ignore the maxim that politics is the art of the possible. We are under no illusion that he has much chance of winning the GOP nomination this election cycle.

Nevertheless we urge a vote for him. This campaign sends a signal to both parties that a significant number of Americans value their country's great Constitution, that many conservatives reject wiretaps, waterboarding, and senseless wars. There is far more realism in Paul's analysis than can be found in those Republicans who believe that Washington's policy of borrowing billions from China to pay for the occupation of a growing number of countries is desirable, much less sustainable.

Ron Paul has been a breath of fresh air in an otherwise desultory Republican campaign. Long may he run.

[ECONOMY]

## SHOP THERAPY

In the dark days following 9/11, we were encouraged to strike back at terrorism by going shopping. So why not head off the looming recession with a trip to the mall?

The \$300 checks Americans will receive courtesy of the president's stimulus plan won't keep them from losing their houses. But maybe they won't notice: think of all the made-in-China goodies they'll be able to buy! (Apparently no one mentioned to Mr. Bush and his Congressional enablers that banking on Beijing is part of the problem.)

Now given the choice between spending \$150 billion on a new government program and returning the money to taxpayers, we much prefer this option. But the notion that we can buy our way out of major system failure is foolish.

A self-styled conservative administration has swelled the federal bureaucracy to unprecedented proportions and committed us to a war that drains \$2 billion per week from the national coffers. The markets falter, the deficit mounts—and those claiming to be fiscally sober plan to fix it all by playing Santa Claus.

But what happens when we can't afford to feed our import addiction? The

Fed's rate slashing ensures the dollar's ongoing decline. To this bleak forecast add rising unemployment, falling federal revenue, and entitlements into eternity.

Someone sees this as cause to shop, but it isn't Americans doing their patriotic duty by buying DVD players. The countries that financed our spree are cashing in, snatching up U.S. assets at bargain prices. And we can scarcely complain, for we lined their pockets—by emptying our own.

[WORLD]

## FREEDOM FIGHTERS

Last month the venerable think tank Freedom House put out its annual report, quantifying that freedom around the world is indeed on the march. Unfortunately, it is heading in the wrong direction. The specifics are in the news most days: slippage away from democracy in Russia and many of the former Soviet Asian regions, increased repression in Egypt, civil war in the Palestinian territories, crackdown in Pakistan, chaos in Kenya.

There is no question that democracy is a better political system than others, that civil liberties are a vital social achievement. But there is an extensive historical and political-science literature focused on why different human societies are the way they are, why political freedom has been a relatively small part of mankind's historical experience, what the sociological preconditions for democracy are, how the superficial trappings of democracy can exist without genuine political freedom. Perhaps the main global trend is indeed toward greater freedom, rule of law, civil liberties, and democracy. But Orwell and Huxley thought differently—and it's not yet obvious that they were wrong.

What does seem clear is that there is a negative correlation between the Bush administration and its neoconservative enablers talking about freedom while

invading other countries and the actual advance of freedom. George W. Bush gives an inaugural address about "fire in the minds of men," proclaims liberty on the march, and orders up air strikes. The result is not only a diminution of liberty around the world but the toxic association of our value system with militarism.

We don't expect Freedom House to advocate a more effective strategy. But one is needed. Our recommendation is to make American democracy at home a more inspirational example to the world, while beginning the long process of decoupling the good idea of freedom from the bad one of Americans invading foreign nations under the guise of liberating them.

[GOP]

## RAY OF SUNSHINE

Counting on ex-New Yorkers and a wealth of moderate Republicans, Rudy Giuliani bet all his electoral chips on Florida and lost. His failure was largely blamed on his decision to pull out of early contests. In reality, it was his flawed ideology.

In an election year where the Republican field contains little of what voters want, and much that they dread, Giuliani offered even less, and yet more.

Lacking foreign-policy experience, Giuliani posed as a crime-fighter while insisting that terrorism could only be defeated by war and occupation rather than law enforcement. Having no credibility on social issues, he pretended that being anti-smut was the *summum bonum* of a pro-family agenda. His economic agenda consisted of little more than touting the Laffer Curve and other supply-side economic trivia. And people wonder why he didn't compete in Michigan.

Giuliani's national candidacy was a symptom of sickness in the GOP. His delayed defeat is a small but welcome sign of health in the party of Goldwater and Reagan. ■

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# The Great Betrayal

Offering more “straight talk” on the Sunday before the Florida primary, John McCain made an arresting prediction: “It’s a tough war we’re in. It’s not going to be over

right away. There’s going to be other wars. I’m sorry to tell you, there’s going to be other wars. We will never surrender but there will be other wars.”

Ike promised to “go to Korea” and ended that war. Nixon pledged to end Vietnam with honor. McCain says we may be in Iraq a hundred years and warns, “there’s going to be other wars.” Take the man at his word.

Mimicking the Beach Boys’ “Barbara Ann,” McCain has joked about “Bomb, bomb, bomb—bomb, bomb Iran” and urged the expulsion of Russia from the G-8. He wants to expand NATO to bring in Georgia and the Ukraine. This could mean confrontation between Russia and the United States over whether South Ossetia and Abkhazia should be free of Georgia or ruled by Tbilisi, a matter of zero vital interest to this country.

We are forewarned. John McCain intends to be a war president.

Where Bush has lately cleansed his administration of neocons, McCain offers the last best hope for a neocon return and restoration and more wars in the Middle East. And if, as seems probable, Bibi Netanyahu again becomes prime minister of Israel, he and a President McCain will find a pretext for war on Iran.

Year 2008 may prove a defining one for conservatives. For on many of the great issues, McCain has sided as often with the Left and the Big Media as he has with the Right.

Where Bush has been at his best, cutting taxes and nominating conservative judges, McCain has been his nemesis. Not only did he vote twice against the Bush

tax cuts, McCain colluded to sell out the most conservative of Bush’s judges

In 1993, McCain voted to confirm the pro-abortion liberal Ruth Bader Ginsburg. But when Bush set out to restore constitutionalism, McCain formed the Gang of 14, seven senators from each party. All agreed to vote to block the GOP Senate from invoking the “nuclear option”—i.e., empowering the GOP to break a filibuster of judicial nominees by majority vote—unless the seven Democrats agreed.

With this record of voting for Clinton justices and joining with Democrats anxious to kill the most conservative Bush’s nominees, what guarantee is there a President McCain would nominate and fight for the fifth jurist who would vote to overturn *Roe v Wade*?

McCain also colluded with liberals to pass McCain-Feingold, a law that denies to Second Amendment folks and right-to-lifers their First Amendment right to identify friends and foes in TV ads before national elections.

On ANWAR, too, McCain votes with the liberals, and on global warming he has moved toward Gore.

After five record trade deficits have denuded the nation of thousands of factories and 3 million manufacturing jobs, McCain is still babbling on about Smoot-Hawley. “When you study history,” he told a Detroit newspaper, “every time we’ve adopted protectionism, we’ve paid a very heavy price.”

But what history was McCain talking about? From Lincoln through Calvin Coolidge, the GOP was the Party of Protection that put 12 presidents in the White

House to two for the Democrats, and the U.S. became the most awesome industrial power and self-reliant nation in the history of mankind, producing 42 percent of the world’s manufactured goods. Even Hillary, whose husband passed NAFTA with McCain’s support, has begun to question the free-trade paradigm and the disastrous results it has produced.

On controlling America’s borders and halting the invasion through Mexico, McCain collaborated with Senate liberals in the McCain-Kennedy amnesty, which was rejected only after a national uprising.

When 190,000 Arizonans petitioned in 2004 to put Prop 200 on the ballot, requiring proof of citizenship before an individual could vote or receive welfare benefits, John McCain led the GOP congressional delegation in opposing it unanimously. Prop 200 passed with the support of 56 percent of all Arizona voters and 46 percent of Hispanics.

Unsurprisingly, Juan Hernandez, the open-borders chatterbox and former adviser to Vicente Fox, has turned up in McCain’s campaign.

On the two issues where Bush has been at his best, taxes and judges, McCain has sided against him. On the three issues that have ravaged the Bush presidency—the misbegotten war in Iraq, the failure to secure America’s borders, and the trade policy that has destroyed the dollar, de-industrialized the country, and left foreigners with \$5 trillion to buy up America—McCain has sided with Bush.

Now McCain is running on a platform that says your jobs are not coming back, the illegals are not going home, but we are going to have more wars. If you don’t like it, vote for Hillary.

And this was to be the Year of Change.

# The Madness of John McCain

A militarist suffering from acute narcissism and armed with the Bush Doctrine is not fit to be commander in chief.

By Justin Raimondo

JOHN MCCAIN'S reputation as a maverick is no recent contrivance. The senator first captured the media spotlight in September 1983, not long after he'd been elected to his first term in the House, when he voted against President Reagan's decision to put American troops in Lebanon as part of a multinational "peacekeeping" force. One of 27 Republicans to break with the White House, the freshman McCain made a floor speech that reads as if it might have been written yesterday—by Ron Paul:

The fundamental question is: What is the United States' interest in Lebanon? It is said we are there to keep the peace. I ask, what peace? It is said we are there to aid the government. I ask, what government? It is said we are there to stabilize the region. I ask, how can the U.S. presence stabilize the region?... The longer we stay in Lebanon, the harder it will be for us to leave. We will be trapped by the case we make for having our troops there in the first place.

What can we expect if we withdraw from Lebanon? The same as will happen if we stay. I acknowledge that the level of fighting will increase if we leave. I regretfully acknowledge that many innocent civilians will be hurt. But I firmly believe this will happen in any event.

Now insert "Iraq" where McCain said "Lebanon." It's as if McCain the Younger foresaw our present predicament and taunted his future incarnation, showing that wisdom doesn't necessarily come with age.

In sketching out McCain's political career alongside a timeline of American interventions abroad, one comes, at last, to a turning point. But his course was set much earlier, in his first visible venture into the realm of national-security issues at the time of the Lebanese events: Reagan's request for U.S. troops and the subsequent attack on the Beirut marine barracks, where 241 military personnel were killed. This vaulted McCain to national attention. His initial opposition to the administration's resolution authorizing the sending of troops was picked up by the media, and he basked in the spotlight. As he put it in his memoir, *Worth the Fighting For*:

It [his vote against the resolution] caught the attention of the Washington press corps, who tend to notice acts of political independence from unexpected quarters. My press secretary, Torie Clarke, began receiving interview requests from national print and broadcast media. Because of my POW experience, I had always enjoyed a little more celebrity than is usually accorded freshmen, but not so much that my views were solicited or even taken seriously by the

national media. Now I was debating Lebanon on programs like the *MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour* and in the pages of the New York Times and the Washington Post. I was gratified by the attention and eager for more.

On the strength of his prescient skepticism of U.S. intervention in a Middle Eastern nation known for its fierce sectarian passions, McCain's star burned bright. *U.S. News & World Report* lauded him as a "Republican on the rise," while on the other side of the culture-chasm, *Rolling Stone* hailed the Arizonan for his dissenting voice on an important foreign policy issue. His reputation was made as that straight-talking, idiosyncratic, interesting Republican congressman from the Southwest, a version of Barry Goldwater the liberal media could like—and would come to love.

Not yet, however: there was a dark interregnum during which McCain and the media were at odds. There were shouting matches between the voluble senator and reporters over the "Keating Five" scandal and his wife's struggle with drugs. But this adversarial relationship turned a corner, in 1991, when the first Gulf War erupted. McCain reflected in his memoir, "As self-interested as this sounds, I was relieved when Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August of that year gave reporters some other reason to talk to me and something else to report."



His position on that war was not the reflexive interventionism we have come to expect from him but a more thoughtful approach, as cited in the *New York Times* of Aug. 19, 1990: "If you get involved in a major ground war in the Saudi desert, I think support will erode significantly. Nor should it be supported. We cannot even contemplate, in my view, trading American blood for Iraqi blood."

McCain preferred to use air power to keep Saddam Hussein out of Saudi Arabia, rather than introducing ground troops, and opposed the call that went out from the more militant neoconservatives that U.S. troops, having freed Kuwait from Saddam's clutches, should push on to Baghdad.

What changed his foreign-policy purview, however, was the Kosovo War. Again he played the maverick role for all it was worth, taking up the cudgels against many in his own party. But this time, he was on the side of intervention.

Monday, April 5, 1999, was a busy day for McCain: Larry King, Charlie Rose, Catherine Crier, two appearances on MSNBC, another two on CNBC, capped by an interview on ABC's "Nightline." The next morning, he was up early for Don Imus. "We've turned down far more than we've accepted," McCain enthused. It was "all McCain, all the time," as one Republican strategist put it to the *Washington Post*, and it sure wasn't hurting his presidential campaign.

"When I urged the president of the United States not to rule out the option of ground forces, then I also assumed responsibility for what may be the loss of young Americans' lives," averred McCain. "I don't know how it affects my campaign. But I've basically put my campaign on hold to some degree."

This was disingenuous, at best. Far from putting his campaign on hold, his newfound visibility gave it a shot in the arm, and political operatives in both parties saluted the pragmatism of his

stance. "He looks presidential at a time when many Republicans don't believe the current president does," said Whit Ayres, an Atlanta-based GOP pollster. "He's where the country is," added Mark Mellman, a Democratic pollster. "Americans certainly like to win and they don't like politicians sniping in the corner when the question is whether we're going to win it."

"We're in it, and we've gotta win it!" McCain repeated endlessly as he berated his "isolationist" fellow Republicans and demanded that they get behind the president and support the war. Yet his support was framed by a critique of the handling of the conflict that disdained Clinton's alleged timidity in taking steps to ensure a victory.

Three weeks after hostilities began, McCain delivered a speech to the Center for Strategic and International Studies in which he declared that American intervention in the Balkans had been effectively stymied: "I think it is safe to assume that no one, including me, anticipated the speed with which Serbia would defeat our objectives in Kosovo, and the scope of that defeat." While conceding, "yes, the war is only three weeks old, and yes, NATO can and probably will prevail in this conflict with what is, after all, a considerably inferior adversary," he warned "victory will not be hastened by pretending that things have just gone swimmingly."

According to McCain, there were two big problems with the conduct of the war: first, "an excessively restricted air campaign that sought the impossible goal of avoiding war while waging one. The second is the repeated declarations from the president, vice president, and other senior officials that NATO would refrain from using ground troops even if the air campaign failed. These two mistakes were made in what almost seemed willful ignorance of every lesson we learned in Vietnam."

We were, he warned, in danger of "losing" to the Serbian army—with its outdated equipment and complete lack of an air force—if we failed to launch air strikes that were "massive, strategic and sustained." Furthermore, "no infrastructure targets should have been off limits"—factories, water plants, hospitals, schools, markets, whatever. Yes, "we all grieve over civilian casualties as well as our own losses," but "they are unavoidable."

But all of this was eminently avoidable, as critics of the war—including many of McCain's fellow Republicans in Congress—pointed out at the time. The war itself was unnecessary. The U.S. was never threatened by the Serbs, and the trumped-up charge of "genocide" was egregious overstatement. Aside from that, the conflict lasted little more than 11 weeks, and, contra McCain, the U.S. was never in danger of losing. A "massive" bombing campaign would have accomplished little aside from inflicting untold suffering on innocent civilians and incurring the everlasting enmity of the Serbian people—and of decent people everywhere.

Yet McCain was persistent in demanding that the situation called for American "boots on the ground"—a phrase that, if you Google it, you'll discover what might be called the McCain Panacea. To hear McCain tell it, there is apparently no crisis anywhere in the world that cannot be resolved by the presence of U.S. armed forces. This full-throated, high-handed interventionism is a long way from the hard-headed realism of the young congressman who challenged the disastrous decision to send peacekeepers to Lebanon by asking, "What peace?"

It is impossible to know what is in McCain's heart. There may be a purely ideological explanation for his changing viewpoint. But what seems to account



for his evolution from realism to hopped-up interventionism is nothing more than sheer ambition. This was the case in 1983, when he defied the Reagan administration over sending U.S. soldiers to die at the hands of a Beirut suicide bomber, and in 1999, when the cry went up to take on Slobodan Milosevic. He was positioning himself against his own party, while staking out a distinctive stance independent of the Democrats. It was, in short, an instance of a presidential candidate maneuvering himself to increase his appeal to the electorate—and, most importantly, the media.

BY 1999, IN DEFENSE OF CLINTON'S WAR, **MCCAIN WAS DECLARING,**  
"I THINK THE UNITED STATES SHOULD INAUGURATE A 21ST-CENTURY POLICY  
INTERPRETATION OF THE REAGAN DOCTRINE, CALL IT **ROGUE STATE ROLLBACK.**"

The brace of arguments McCain made in his CSIS speech in support of the Kosovo War didn't hold together at the time—and fares even worse in retrospect. According to McCain, the Serbs threatened "our global credibility and the long-term viability of the Atlantic Alliance"—the former because two successive presidents had warned Milosevic against committing "aggression" against Kosovo, and failure to act would embolden other "rogue states" to defy American edicts. Yet McCain's reasoning is circular: according to him, our government's edicts must be obeyed because they are, by definition, non-negotiable—even by Americans. A certain course, once taken, must be pursued to the bitter end, even if it acts against our long-term interests. McCain's worldview, which admits no possibility of error, is undiluted hubris.

The illogic of McCain's interventionism is further underscored by his appeal to "the long-term viability of the NATO

alliance." With the implosion of the Communist empire a decade earlier, the original rationale for the creation of the alliance vanished. Was the unnatural perpetuation of an outmoded alliance really worth the lives of 5,000 Serbs, mostly civilians?

McCain's arguments are so facile that one can hardly believe they are held with any degree of sincerity. There has to be something else involved, and a hint of this was revealed in the opening of his CSIS address, thanking his sponsors "for so graciously providing me a forum to share a few thoughts on the crisis in the Balkans. I've been having a terrible time

finding media opportunities to get my views out, so I appreciate your help."

One can well imagine the appreciative laughter, albeit tinged with an undertone of nervous uncertainty at the sight of someone who gets far too much pleasure out of being in the spotlight. Such narcissism, unseemly in anyone, is especially unbefitting in a president, yet it is key to understanding McCain's evolution from conventional Republican realist to relentless interventionist.

During the 1990s, he earned the attention and adulation of the media by supporting a war most journalists approved of and doing so more consistently and vociferously than even the Clinton administration. He's pursuing the same strategy now that we're in Iraq. While the media has largely turned against this particular war, McCain's criticism of Donald Rumsfeld and the Bush administration's handling of the war has won him plaudits and given him credit as the "real" author of the surge.

If opportunism married to an inflated ego birthed his persona as the Ares of America's political pantheon, then this psycho-political pathology soon found expression as a full-blown delusional system. By 1999, in defense of Clinton's war, McCain was declaring, "I think the United States should inaugurate a 21st-century policy interpretation of the Reagan Doctrine, call it rogue state rollback, in which we politically and materially support indigenous forces within and outside of rogue states to overthrow regimes that threaten our interests and values."

In 2006, McCain traveled to Tskhinvali, in the disputed region South Ossetia, where pro-Russian citizens want to secede from the former Soviet republic of Georgia and seek union with Russia. After his visit, he concluded:

I think that the attitude there is best described by what you see by driving in [to Tskhinvali]: a very large billboard with a picture of Vladimir Putin on it, which says 'Vladimir Putin Our President.' I do not believe that Vladimir Putin is now, or ever should be, the president of sovereign Georgian soil.

Imagine if the British, annoyed by American encroachments in Texas, had sent a member of Parliament to denounce the defenders of the Alamo. That, at any rate, is how the South Ossetians think of it. And what American interests or values are at stake in that dirt-poor, war-torn corner of the Caucasus? What American values are reflected in the Mafia-like "democratic" government of today's Kosovo, where Orthodox churches are burnt-out ruins and the few remaining Serbs are under siege?

In the warmonger sweepstakes now taking place among the major GOP presidential contenders, John McCain out-demagogued even Rudy Giuliani,

whose studied belligerence seems narrowly centered on the Middle East. McCain's enmity is universal: if he were president, in addition to taking on the Arabs and the Persians, we'd soon be at loggerheads with the Russians. The G-8, he says, should be "a club of leading market democracies: It should include Brazil and India but exclude Russia." Putin's Russia, he claims, is "revanchist" and surely qualifies as one of those "rogue states" that "threaten our values." If we take him at his word, President McCain would launch a campaign for "regime change" in Moscow, just as we did in Iraq.

Prefiguring the revolutionary Jacobinism of Bush's second inaugural address, which proclaimed the goal of U.S. foreign policy to be "ending tyranny in our world," McCain was straining at the bit to launch a global crusade while George W. Bush was still touting the virtues of a more "humble foreign policy." Neither time nor bitter experience has mitigated his militancy.

Other politicians were transformed by 9/11. McCain was unleashed. His strategy of "rogue state rollback" was exactly what the neoconservatives in the Bush administration had in mind, and yet, ever mindful to somehow stand out from the pack while still going along with the program, the senator took umbrage at Rumsfeld's apparent unwillingness to chew up the U.S. military in an endless occupation. He publicly dissented from the "light footprint" strategy championed by the Department of Defense. More troops, more force, more of everything—that is McCain's solution to every problem in our newly conquered province.

Rumsfeld became increasingly unpopular not only with the American people—the abrasive defense secretary saw his poll numbers dropping to 34 percent from 39 percent in May 2004, as McCain and Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf

took aim—but also with the media, which had grown tired of him. In the bitter winter of 2001, when the War Party was riding high, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* had enthused, "No doubt about it, Donald Rumsfeld is a stud muffin." As Rumsfeld's cachet faded, McCain felt safe in attacking him, and, after Rumsfeld had resigned, declaring him "one of the worst secretaries of defense in history." As the war itself became more unpopular, McCain managed a feat of triangulation of Clintonian proportions, posing simultaneously as a war critic and a super hawk.

He was unrelenting in his criticism of the Bush administration, even as he pledged to carry its foreign policy forward: he continued to denounce the "tragic mismanagement" of the war, while hailing the surge—and strongly implying that the Bush White House had plagiarized his views. With the war enjoying the support of about a quarter of the American people, however, it was necessary to frame a narrative that would deflect the disadvantages of a pro-war position, while enhancing his image as a straight-shooter who doesn't care about polls and just tells it like it is.

But "straight talk" has increasingly turned to reckless talk: on the campaign trail, he was caught on video singing "Bomb, bomb, bomb Iran" to the tune of "Barbara Ann"—not one of his better moments. With his presidential campaign in the doldrums, and Giuliani and the rest of the Republican pack stealing much of his thunder, a new extremism seemed to possess him: in answer to repeated questions from one antiwar voter, McCain told a town-hall meeting in Derry, New Hampshire that the United States could stay in Iraq for "maybe a hundred years" and that "would be fine with me... as long as Americans aren't being killed or injured" in any great numbers, as in Korea.

Yet the longer we stay in Iraq, the more hostility is directed at American soldiers. The majority of Iraqis now believe attacks on our troops are justified, a far cry from McCain's prewar prediction that it is "more likely that antipathy toward the United States in the Islamic world might diminish amid the demonstrations of jubilant Iraqis celebrating the end of a regime that has few equals in its ruthlessness."

McCain isn't bothered by the failure of his prediction, just as the absence of WMD in Iraq didn't phase him in the least. He is an actor following a script that was written years ago and cannot be altered because of mere facts: he is McCain the Conqueror, the fearless war hero, the commander in chief who will lead us to victory and stay in Iraq, as he told *Mother Jones* magazine, for "a thousand years, a million years" because American grit will tame those obstreperous Iraqis, just as we tamed the Koreans, the Bosnians, the Japanese, and the rest.

With the extreme rhetoric appearing to work, an emboldened McCain recently told a crowd of supporters in Florida: "It's a tough war we're in. It's not going to be over right away. There's going to be other wars. I'm sorry to tell you, there's going to be other wars. We will never surrender, but there will be other wars."

If McCain finally makes it to the White House, the U.S. will surely start new wars, and not just in the Middle East. With the world as his stage, the persona McCain has created—given visible expression by what Camille Paglia trenchantly described as "the over-intense eyes of Howard Hughes and the clenched, humorless jaw line of Nurse Diesel (from Mel Brooks' Hitchcock parody, *High Anxiety*)"—will have every opportunity to act out his fantasies of soldierly greatness. ■

*Justin Raimondo is editorial director of Antiwar.com.*

# Presidential Pardon

For John McCain, there's no such thing as illegal immigration.

**By W. James Antle III**

WELCOME TO John McCain's Amnesty Apology Tour. In his quest to win the conservative primary votes that eluded him in his previous bid for the Republican presidential nomination, the four-term Arizona senator is presenting himself as a born-again border protector. The defeat of McCain's "comprehensive" immigration legislation—painstakingly crafted with Ted Kennedy—is central to his conversion experience. "I got the message," McCain vowed repeatedly on the campaign trail in South Carolina. "We will secure the borders first." Cross his heart.

McCain's minuet with the Minutemen has managed to persuade some primary voters. In South Carolina, he finished second among Republicans who listed controlling illegal immigration as their top issue—a result almost as incomprehensible as his first-place showing among antiwar Republicans in New Hampshire—running just 8 points behind Mike Huckabee, another newly hatched immigration hawk. McCain now insists that he never supported amnesty and that it is "absolutely false" to say he did.

Time for a little straight talk, as the candidate himself might say. No national Republican leader has a longer or more consistent record of advocating legal status for nearly all of the country's 12 to 20 million illegal immigrants—not even George W. Bush. McCain's nomination would push the politics of immigration to the left and potentially unravel the conservative consensus in favor of attrition through enforcement. "To build an immigration record that's worse than Huckabee's and even Giuliani's takes

some doing, but that's what McCain has done," immigration writer James Edwards argued. "McCain's record is more in line with Democrat candidates."

McCain wasn't always so squeamish about the word "amnesty." "Amnesty has to be an important part [of immigration reform] because there are people who have lived in this country for 20, 30 or 40 years, who have raised children here and pay taxes here and are not citizens," he told the *Tucson Citizen* in May 2003. "I think we can set up a program where amnesty is extended to a certain number of people who are eligible..."

But even after McCain retreated to such euphemisms as "path to citizenship" and "temporary worker," the substance of his position remained the same. The different versions of the bill he co-authored with Ted Kennedy offered legal status to illegal immigrants for as little as \$2,000, provided they were willing to jump through various administrative hoops. As former Atty. Gen. Ed Meese has pointed out, the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986—which no one disputes was an amnesty—also put conditions on legalization.

The most recent McCain-sponsored Senate immigration bill offered loophole-ridden, repeatedly renewable Z visas that would have extended swift legal status to millions. Background checks had to be completed in a single business day with frequently unreliable documentation. The visas could be renewed by simply taking—not passing—the naturalization test and getting on a waiting list for an English class.

In addition to assuming a leadership

role in every bipartisan coalition to ram amnesty through the Senate and down the American people's throats, McCain has worked to dilute border-enforcement measures. He voted for an amendment to kill the border fence by forcing federal authorities to "consult" with Mexico before construction. He voted against an amendment to permanently bar gang members, terrorists, sex offenders, alien absconders, repeat DUI convicts, and illegal immigrants convicted of domestic violence. He also voted against an amendment that would have blocked Social Security credits to illegals guilty of identity fraud.

McCain led Republican opposition to Arizona's Proposition 200, which required proof of legal status before obtaining certain government services. The initiative passed anyway with 56 percent of the vote, including 47 percent of Hispanics. He has been a consistent foe of official-English campaigns, starting with Arizona's Article 28 two decades ago.

As a co-sponsor of the DREAM Act, McCain promoted in-state tuition for illegal immigrants and a targeted amnesty for their family members. In 1999, the liberal-leaning League of Latin American Citizens gave McCain its Legislative Friendship Award based on his support for bilingual education and opposition to many immigration restrictions.

McCain has backed away from some of these positions. He eventually voted to fund the border fence. He missed an October vote on the DREAM Act and has hinted that he no longer supports the bill as written. But these campaign-season conversions have to be taken in the con-



text of his complete voting record, which gets low marks from Americans for Better Immigration—a D overall and an F on votes related to amnesty.

In the summer of 2007, these votes and his pro-amnesty alliance with the Democrats nearly derailed his presidential candidacy. Having already alienated the party's business wing with his campaign-finance reforms and tax-cut intransigence, McCain's position on illegal immigration was poison to small donors. With less cash on hand than Ron Paul, the McCain campaign hemorrhaged staff, with longtime aides John Weaver and Terry Nelson departing.

Republicans were in full rebellion against the latest version of McCain-Kennedy. Rush Limbaugh dubbed it the "Destroy the Republican Party Act," House Minority Leader John Boehner called it a "piece of s--t." Newt Gingrich appeared on Sean Hannity's show to declare that the immigration deal amounted to a "sellout of every conservative principle." Even sympathetic pundits like Bill Kristol and John Podhoretz came out against the bill as its public support dipped as low as 25 percent.

McCain's poll numbers also tanked, as he was the only Republican presidential candidate willing to defend the bill. Then front-runner Rudy Giuliani, a one-time amnesty supporter, smartly pivoted and opposed McCain-Kennedy on technical grounds. Despite past statements to the contrary, Mitt Romney, hardly an immigration restrictionist in the past, attacked McCain's stance.

Six months later, McCain is attempting a similar reinvention. The defeated immigration legislation has receded into history, and McCain is trying to make a comeback. To do so, he has to distance himself from his past votes and pledge to secure the borders before attempting anything like McCain-Kennedy again. He says he now realizes that amnesty-plus-enforcement deals are a nonstarter.

Even McCain's revised position is inadequate. He says that he will have border-state governors certify that illegal crossings are under control. But over 40 percent of illegal immigrants enter legally and overstay their visas. Only stepped-up employer sanctions and interior enforcement can reduce the existing illegal population. An overly border-centric approach can actually increase that population by making illegals reluctant to return home.

The larger problem is that there is no reason to believe that McCain's current enforcement-first posture will endure long past the 2008 election. It is simply a concession to Republican voters that is likely to be abandoned as soon as political conditions change. On this issue, McCain is as much as conviction politician as Tom Tancredo—except that he ardently believes conservative concerns about uncontrolled immigration have no rational basis.

In fact, McCain treats those who disagree with him as ignoramuses at best, racists and xenophobes at worst. He believes the United States is a propositional nation and that any reduction in immigration would be contrary to Ronald Reagan's Shining City on a Hill. He combines multicultural politics with the cheap-labor lobby's economics. Until it began to threaten his presidential ambitions, McCain had difficulty hiding his contempt for those to his right on immigration.

Speaking to the AFL-CIO's Building and Construction Trades Department, McCain challenged opponents of his amnesty bill to pick lettuce in Arizona for \$50 per hour. After several shouts of acceptance, McCain replied, "You can't do it, my friends." Immigration-reform groups subsequently flooded the senator's office with calls, applications, and heads of lettuce.

That was a lighthearted exchange compared to McCain's other choice

words for immigration reformers. "But I'll build the g--damned fence if they want," he growled to *Vanity Fair*. When Sen. John Cornyn (R-Texas) disagreed with him about immigration-enforcement provisions, McCain reportedly shot back, "F--k you!" Organizations like Numbers USA and the Center for Immigration Studies shouldn't expect greater collegiality.

Or receptiveness to their arguments. McCain shows no familiarity with the economic literature on immigration, preferring slogans about jobs Americans won't do. He has not read the studies suggesting that the current wave of unskilled immigration has yielded virtually no net economic benefit to American workers and has hurt the most economically vulnerable among us, themselves disproportionately black and Hispanic.

Despite the proliferation of op-eds and policy papers arguing for attrition via enforcement, McCain continues to claim that the only alternatives are amnesty or mass deportations. He thinks of immigration only in terms of the hard cases that make bad law. "But I'll tell you this, ma'am," McCain said to a voter in Michigan. "I'm not going to call up a soldier who's fighting in Iraq today and tell him I'm going to deport his mother."

The odds that McCain, who delights in his maverick reputation, would be constrained by the conservative coalition once in office are small. He will be tempted to revisit the immigration issue with a Democratic Congress. Asked before the Florida primary whether a President McCain would sign an immigration bill similar to McCain-Kennedy if it came to his desk, he replied, "Yeah. But look. . . It isn't going to come." If a McCain administration comes, those assurances will ring hollow. The new Amnesty Advocacy Tour will have begun. ■

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# In Vain He Didn't Try

By James G. Poulos

NEVER SUITED to the hard labor required of a machine candidacy, Fred Thompson on Jan. 22 collapsed under the demands of late modernism and abandoned his bid for the presidency. He was right to persist in his easygoing contempt for a system that requires nominees to work harder to become president than to be president and right to dismiss suggestions that the more facts one masters and the more obsessively one strategizes, the better a politician one is.

Inconsistent in style, in content, in schedule, and in popularity—however one takes his conservatism—he remained stalwart in his conviction that those running for president are entitled to do so on their own terms.

Thompson was the ambling antimatter to the hard core of militarized partisan politics. Before the bruised egos, the millions spent, the small-ball, high-stakes madness in which we test our candidates' abilities to jump the petty details of organizational management through the flaming hoop of hype, Fred looked like the real transformational candidate—a guy who reminded us that the presidency is a job placed somewhere in the Great Chain of Being between beer buddy and second coming of Christ. He embodied that upper-middle range personality that roamed the Western world in the aristocratic age. Other candidates outplayed, outlasted, or outwitted their way to the possibility of power; Thompson deigned to.

This temperament, incomprehensible today as anything but a pose, throws a wooden shoe into the smooth cognitive cogs of the democratic psyche. As Tocqueville knew, in the age of equality we want one kind of person and one kind of power, and we create the kind of bureau-

cratic government capable of maintaining the only sort of permanence detectable in a mob scene of mass competition. That permanence is nothing but generality—the all-purpose ability to produce the most efficient directions about what to value in order to get ahead.

Fred Thompson was already ahead—and had been for a long time.

In an atmosphere dominated by the Clintonian ethic of stop-at-nothing, Thompson's ability to win friends and influence people without really trying strikes the popular wisdom as pathological. Envious souls bridle at his audacity in daring to be already well satisfied with himself. But pride spurs a satisfaction at even weak evidence that the science of gratifying ambitions might not rule our future as an iron law.

Too often the confluence of these emotions points to a cut-rate compromise: the cult of the amateur critic. It's striking that, after finally joining the race, the actor's great failure was judged to be his inability to adequately entertain. The natural knock against the thespian and sometime senator is that he's Biden Zero, a no-calorie ego lacking in substance. But Thompson's critics wanted more vanity, not more substantive policy speeches. When he finally made a late-breaking effort to inject some pep into his stump style, he earned acclaim for batting low-budget laughs at easy targets. Nothing was more disappointing than watching amateur critics set popular opinion by cheering Thompson's willingness to subvert Mike Huckabee to amateur criticism.

The rise of Web 2.0 has done much to enliven and deepen debate. But it has also supplied powerful publicity tools to a narcissistic, often nihilistic, cadre of

defamers and profaners. Bitchy put-downs and cutting sarcasm are increasingly setting the tempo of mainstream commentary—a cultural milieu primed to make the ever more trivial *faux pas* ever more devastating.

Not even Thompson, the guy who has everything, could resist dabbling in the politics of reality TV. This was all the more sad considering the manly way Thompson declined to go slumming. Repeatedly tempted to politicize religion, he set it aside, frankly and straightforwardly. He ignored those playing worthless parlor games about his wife, suggesting he had married her for no more complicated reason than that he wanted to. And he refused to shy away from the prospect of good, clean political conflict, on the issue of health entitlement reform in particular. Without rancor or manipulation, Thompson rejected the effete bipartisan notion that we must avoid at all costs the discomfort that results from politics in which one side must decisively win.

Now he will bring none of those qualities to the White House—unless a certain secondary slot should open up. There are a lot of could've's and should've's for a Thompson fan to dwell on. More productive to think hard about what Thompson reminded us a presidential candidate can be: capable, without fetishizing omnicompetence; amiable, without peddling a thin sense of therapeutic togetherness; honorable, without having to be a hero.

As the poet urged, "If that standard of virtue is still not in vain, Silence the sigh—'oh, vanity campaign!'" ■

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# Progressively Irrelevant

How John Edwards proved that the old Democratic coalition is dead

By Michael Brendan Dougherty

ON JOHN EDWARDS'S last trip to South Carolina before the Iowa caucuses, his campaign planned a typical "unscheduled" stop in downtown Charleston at Jack's Cafe. His volunteers assured reporters that they were building momentum, but even they didn't believe this. In the hour before his visit, co-eds wearing flip flops and referring to themselves as "progressives" put up their welcome signs on the burger joint's orange walls. They carried copies of left-wing magazines and portrayed their man as the only choice for intellectual liberals. Obama was too vague and Hillary too calculating. The following week, the popular liberal blogger Matthew Yglesias would write, "Edwards' willingness to embrace progressives and the progressive movement deserves to be rewarded."

The problem for Edwards was that progressives and only progressives embraced him. The crowd at Jack's was mostly young white college kids registered to vote in other states. Only a half dozen were from his desired audience, the working class. Five minutes before he arrived, a car pulled up and delivered the only four black people who would attend this event. These stood in their Sunday best between the camera crews and the flip-flop brigade. But they couldn't hide what was obvious to everyone there: the candidate of the progressive intelligentsia had nothing like a progressive coalition of voters.

In 2004, Edwards won the South Carolina primary, capturing half the white vote and over a third of the black vote—

the highest of any candidate that year, even beating Al Sharpton, who took just 17 percent. Edwards won strong pluralities across every income group, doing as well with people who make under \$30,000 per year as he did with those earning over \$100,000.

This cycle, he won just 2 percent of South Carolina's black vote and came in third among voters earning less than \$50,000 a year—the targets of his rhetorical appeal. Voters who decided in the final days broke his way, but the media has largely attributed this to the nastiness of the campaign between Clinton and Obama, not to Edwards's merits.

He had tougher electoral terrain to scale this time. Sharpton isn't nearly as credible as Obama, and the 2004 front-runner, John Kerry, was little known in the South, whereas Hillary Clinton has been a fixture in national politics for over 15 years. His rivals have also out-raised and outspent him nearly five to one.

Edwards himself has also changed. His election to the Senate in 1998 occasioned comparisons to Bill Clinton. Both were charming, centrist, and southern. But what had been a generally optimistic campaign in 2004, in which Edwards sought to bring together "two Americas," became "the fight of our lives" in his urgent new cadence. In the past, Edwards used his "son of a mill-worker" image to inspire. This round he told audiences the shockingly sad story of Natalie Sarkisian, a 17-year old who died waiting for her health insurer to

approve a liver transplant. Christopher Hayes of *The Nation* noted that the Edwards stump speech, though righteous, is never a crowd pleaser, saying that it's "a bit like attending a funeral for the American dream."

Under the influence of former Dean adviser and progressive guru, Joe Trippi, Edwards made his 2008 campaign about naming enemies: the Bush administration, corporate lobbyists, and insurance companies. But "the people" he cast as fighting moneyed interests never lined up behind him. Why did his populist appeal fail so spectacularly?

Facile explanations blame the candidate himself, saying that a man with a \$400 haircut cannot lead the party of the working class. But Roosevelt wore a top hat and white gloves while campaigning on behalf of the "ill-clothed, ill-housed, and ill-fed." Edwards lost because the Democratic coalition he sought to capture has changed dramatically from the time of the New Deal and cannot be reconstituted.

Edwards campaigned as if he could restore Reagan Democrats to their ancestral party. But the old liberal alliance that consisted of rural whites, trade unionists, immigrants (European), and recently enfranchised blacks is no longer the Democratic coalition. Today, where the party is white, it is less working class. Where it is working class, it is less organized and more divided into competing racial categories. Where it is unionized, it is not private-sector and is thus less insecure about its economic future.



The decline of Democratic allegiance among white men is well documented. Roughly half voted for John F. Kennedy, but not even a third of them voted for Ronald Reagan just 20 years later, and only 36 percent voted for John Kerry in 2004. And not just the racial composition of the party has changed. As Thomas Edsall has pointed out, since 1960, the Democratic share of voters employed in the professions “has doubled from 18 to 35 percent, whereas the share of the Democratic vote made up of lower-income skilled and non-skilled workers has dropped from 50 percent to 35 percent.”

Edwards’s campaign has highlighted the electoral decline of organized labor. After his 2004 bid, Edwards threw himself into every labor dispute he could find. As Jason Zengerele documented in *The New Republic*, the millworker’s son visited Teamsters in Connecticut, hotel-workers in Honolulu, janitors in Florida.

## EDWARDS’S SUPPORT AMONG ORGANIZED LABOR DIDN’T WIN HIM MUCH MORE THAN CREDIBILITY AMONG SELF-CONSCIOUS PROGRESSIVES.

He eventually won the endorsements of the Iowa and New Hampshire chapters of the SEIU. Little good it did him. In 1960, 37 percent of the private-sector workforce was union-organized. Men like Teamster leader Jimmy Hoffa and United Mine Workers’ John Lewis were political kingmakers. By 2003, just over 8 percent of private-sector workers were unionized. Edwards’s support among organized labor didn’t win him much more than credibility among self-conscious progressives. And when labor endorsements were electorally significant (like those from service workers in Michigan and Nevada), they went to the more competitive candidate, Barack Obama.

Public-sector unions now make up half of organized labor. These voters, drawn from the ranks of teachers, police, fireman, and government bureaucracies, have guaranteed pensions, usually indexed to rise with the cost of living. Appeals to economic insecurity rarely stir them except in large cities where housing costs have risen exponentially. Whereas the old power of organized labor appealed to an American sense of fairness in sharing wealth, the new public-sector-dominated unions seek only to expand their benefits and insulate themselves from private competition. For instance, school teachers who oppose vouchers.

The 35 percent of the liberal alliance that belongs to the professional classes does not vote out of economic interests either. These are values voters, who feel more comfortable in a party that accepts and defends the legacy of the sexual revolution and is less resistant to same-sex

marriage. On the campaign trail, Edwards was reticent about gay rights, saying that he favors civil unions but opposes full marriage rights for same-sex couples because of his upbringing. Edwards’s discomfort with the LGBT community increasingly makes him an oddity in elite Democratic circles.

Even among the parts of the modern Democratic coalition that are analogous to the old liberal constituency, blacks and recent immigrant groups (now Hispanic), there is little unity, and Edwards did terribly among them. Nearly eight in ten black voters in South Carolina voted for Obama. And in the Nevada caucus, Hispanics voted so overwhelmingly against Obama (and for Clinton) that main-

stream media outlets like *Newsweek* fretted about a growing black-brown political divide. At least in the primaries, the shared economic interests of America’s racial minorities mattered little or not at all—much to Edwards’ dismay

This reality of the Democratic coalition may be one reason (besides celebrity and money) that Clinton and Obama have had so much success with candidacies that offer little policy substance compared to Edwards. Whereas Edwards called himself a fighter who will stand up to lobbyists and the forces of greed, Obama deploys rhetoric that skirts past economic distress altogether, saying in a recent speech, “It’s not about rich versus poor; young versus old; black versus white, this election is about past versus future.”

And Edwards found out the hard way that the past is useless to a Democratic nominee. The last successful effort of the old Democratic coalition barely elected Bill Clinton over the damaged patrician, George H.W. Bush, the last representative of Old Guard Republicanism. The long realignment of the South and the Northeast and the migration of the working class to the GOP has transformed both parties. As Andy Stern, the head of the SEIU points out to progressives, “We’re as far today from the New Deal as the New Deal was from the Civil War. I don’t think Franklin Roosevelt looked back to Lincoln to decide what to do.”

It was almost fitting then that John Edwards’s campaign rallies were funereal. His defeat in the primaries signals the end of a long-held progressive hope: that the social and racial politics that began tearing apart the FDR coalition could be overcome and a left-liberal majority could again be built out of the white working class, together with blacks, immigrants, and women. When dropping out, Edwards promised that his rivals would take up his cause. Old dreams die hard. ■

# Value Voters

The best indicator of whether a state will swing Red or Blue? The cost of buying a home and raising a family.

By Steve Sailer

NO MATTER WHO wins the 2008 presidential election, pundits will afterwards hypothesize feverishly about why the country is so divided into vast inland expanses of Red (Republican) regions versus thin coastal strips of Blue (Democratic) metropolises. Yet looking at 2000 and 2004, few will stumble upon the engine driving this partisan pattern, even though the statistical correlations are among the highest in the history of the social sciences.

The Republicans lost the popular vote in 2000 while advocating a “humble” foreign policy and won in 2004 while defending a foreign policy that Napoleon might have found bombastic. But all that happened from 2000 to 2004 was that virtually every part of the country moved a few points toward the Republicans. The relative stability of this Red-Blue geographic split suggests that more fundamental forces are at work than just the transient issues of the day.

Neither Jane Austen nor Benjamin Franklin, however, would have found the question of what drives the Red-Blue divide so baffling. Unlike today’s intellectuals, they both thought intensely about the web linking wealth, property, marriage, and children. They would not have been surprised that a state’s voting proclivities are now dominated by the relative presence or absence of affordable family formation.

First-time readers of *Pride and Prejudice* frequently remark that Austen’s romance novels are, by American standards, not

terribly romantic. She possessed a hard-headed understanding of how in traditional English society, wedlock was a luxury that some would never be able to afford, an assumption that often shocks us in our more sentimental 21st century.

Economic historian Gregory Clark’s recent book, *A Farewell to Alms*, quantified the Malthusian reality under the social structure acerbically depicted in Austen’s books. The English in the 1200-1800 era imposed upon themselves the sexual self-restraint that pioneering economist Thomas Malthus famously (but belatedly) suggested they follow in 1798. By practicing population control, the English largely avoided the cycles of rapid growth followed by cataclysmic famines that plagued China, where women married universally and young. The English postponed marriage and children until a man and woman could afford the accouterments suitable for a respectable married couple of their class.

In the six centuries up through Austen’s lifetime, Clark found, English women didn’t marry on average until age 24 to 26, with poor women often having to wait until their 30s to wed. And 10 to 20 percent never married. Judging from the high fertility of married couples, contraceptive practices appear to have been almost unknown in England in this time, but merely three or four percent of all births were illegitimate, demonstrating that rigid premarital self-discipline was the norm.

Remarkably, a half-century before Malthus’s gloomy and Austen’s witty reflections on life and love in crowded

England, Ben Franklin had pointed out that in his lightly populated America, the human condition was more relaxed and happy. In his insightful 1751 essay, “Observations concerning The Increase of Mankind,” Franklin spelled out, with an 18th-century surfeit of capitalization, the first, nonpartisan half of the theory of affordable family formation: “For People increase in Proportion to the Number of Marriages, and that is greater in Proportion to the Ease and Convenience of supporting a Family. When Families can be easily supported, more Persons marry, and earlier in Life.”

He outlined the virtuous cycle connecting the colonies’ limited population, low land prices, high wages, early marriage, and abundant children: “Europe is generally full settled with Husbandmen, Manufacturers, &c. and therefore cannot now much increase in People. ... Land being thus plenty in America, and so cheap as that a labouring Man, that understands Husbandry, can in a short Time save Money enough to purchase a Piece of new Land sufficient for a Plantation, whereon he may subsist a Family; such are not afraid to marry...” Franklin concluded, “Hence Marriages in America are more general, and more generally early, than in Europe.”

The Industrial Revolution broke the tyranny of the Malthusian Trap over food, but the supply of and demand for land never ceased to influence decisions to marry and have children. As America’s coastal regions filled up, affordability of family formation

began to differ sharply from state to state (disparities partially masked over the last few years by subprime mortgages and other financial gambits). CNN reported in 2006: "More than 90 percent of homes in [Indianapolis] were affordable to families earning the median income for the area of about \$65,100. In Los Angeles, the least affordable big metro area, only 1.9 percent of the homes sold were within the reach of families earning a median income for the city of \$56,200."

When I lived in the Midwest, from age 24 to 34, I attended numerous weddings, but as my social circle matured, the invitations naturally dried up. Yet when I moved back to my native, but now much more expensive, Los Angeles in 2000, I suddenly started being invited to weddings again. Like male characters in a Jane Austen novel, four of my seven closest friends from my high-school class of 1976 got married and bought houses for the first time in their early forties.

Similarly, the cost of childrearing varies more across the country than ever before. A study of census data by the *New York Times* found that "Manhattan's 35,000 or so white non-Hispanic toddlers are being raised by parents whose median income was \$284,208 a year in 2005." Second was San Francisco, where the 50th percentile of income for white parents of small children fell at \$150,763. That explains a lot about why the city by the bay is last in the country in percentage of residents under 18, below even retirement havens such as Palm Beach.

The culture wars between Red and Blue States are driven in large part by these objective differences in how family-friendly they are, financially speaking. For example, according to ACCRA, a nonprofit organization that measures the cost of living so corporations can adjust the salaries of employees they relocate, the liberal San Francisco-Oakland area is twice as expensive as the conservative Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex. The BestPlaces.net

calculator reports, "To maintain the same standard of living, your salary of \$100,000 in San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, California could decrease to \$49,708 in Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, Texas."

Not surprisingly, the San Francisco area is popular with people who don't need a big backyard for their kids, such as homosexuals and childless couples, while North Texas attracts families from across America. San Francisco is very Democratic, while the Metroplex is quite Republican.

Why? The simplest explanation is that GOP "family values" resound more in states where people can more afford to have families. In parts of the country where "Families can be easily supported, more Persons marry, and earlier in Life." And where it is economical to buy a house with a yard in a neighborhood with a decent public school, you will generally find more

their current state affects how likely they are to start down the path toward married-with-children conservatism and therefore, cumulatively, which party will eventually prevail nationally.

Imagine a young couple considering marriage who live in the San Francisco Bay Area. He makes \$60,000 and she makes \$40,000 annually. If he could find a job that pays \$50,000 in northern Texas, where costs are only half as high, she could stay home and raise the children. But if they can't bear to leave California, with its inspiring scenery and lovely weather, she will have to keep working. And if she has to work, are children really such a good idea? And if they aren't going to have children, why get married at all? And if they aren't married, are they going to appreciate the nagging of socially conservative politicians?

### IT'S A STEREOTYPE THAT **MARRIAGE, MORTGAGE, AND KIDS MAKE PEOPLE MORE CONSERVATIVE**, BUT, LIKE MOST **STEREOTYPES**, IT'S REASONABLY TRUE.

conservatives. It's a stereotype that marriage, mortgage, and kids make people more conservative, but, like most stereotypes, it's reasonably true. You'll find fewer Republicans in places where family formation is expensive. Where fewer people can form families, Republican candidates making speeches about family values just sound irrelevant or irritating.

The arrow of causality points in both directions. Some family-oriented people move to more affordable states in order to marry and have children, while people uninterested in marriage and children move in the opposite direction to enjoy adult lifestyles. This population swapping just makes the electorate more divided by geography rather than tipping the national balance toward one party.

Still, for the many Americans whose innate inclinations fall somewhere in the middle, the cost of forming a family in

Four interlocking reasons explain why the affordability of family formation paints the electoral map red or blue.

First is the Dirt Gap: Republican regions simply have more acres of land per person. Even excluding Alaska, counties that voted for Bush are only one-fourth as densely populated on average as Kerry's counties. Blue State metropolises, such as Boston, Seattle, and Chicago, are mostly located on oceans or Great Lakes, so their suburban expansion is permanently limited to their landward sides. (That's why Chicago has a West Side but not an East Side.) In contrast, Red State metropolises (such as Atlanta, Phoenix, and San Antonio) are mostly inland. They tend to be surrounded by dirt, not water, allowing their suburbs to spread out over virtually 360 degrees. The supply of suburban land available for development is larger in Red State cities, so the price is lower.



To demonstrate this, consider the 53 percent of the nation's population who live in the 50 largest metropolitan areas. Among these folks, 73 percent of the Blue Staters live in metropolises bounded by deep water, compared to only 19 percent of the Red Staters.

The second major factor in the Red-Blue divide is the Mortgage Gap. As the law of supply and demand dictates, the limited availability of suburban dirt in most Blue States means housing generally costs more.

This has a striking political corollary. According to ACCRA, Bush carried the 20 states that have the cheapest housing costs, while Kerry won the nine states that are most expensive. The states with the lowest-cost housing are Mississippi (where Bush won an extraordinary 85 percent of the white vote), Arkansas (home state of Bill Clinton but now solidly Republican) and the GOP's anchor state of Texas.

In recent years, the most expensive state for housing has been California. Although GOP presidential candidates carried California nine out of ten times from 1952 to 1988, they have not come close in the four elections since. Next

most expensive are Hawaii and the District of Columbia (where Bush won only 9 percent).

Of course, Blue State cities are also more likely to use environmental and zoning restrictions to limit housing supply artificially. Portland, Oregon, for instance, is an inland city that pretends to be a coastal city by outlawing development of most adjoining land, thereby inflating home costs. This has helped turn Portland, once a blue-collar burgh, into one of America's most fashionable cities. Indeed, so many young whites have moved to Portland that some are now gentrifying stretches of the inner city's Martin Luther King Boulevard. (A cynic might suggest that the fact that Portland's leftist land-use regulations tend to drive out poor blacks and slow the influx of Hispanic illegal immigrants is not an accidental bug but a planned feature.) These development restrictions make children more expensive, as the title of a 2005 *New York Times* article focusing on Portland made clear: "Vibrant Cities Find One Thing Missing: Children."

Moreover, the Mortgage Gap has been growing. Bush was victorious in the 26 states with the least home-price inflation

since 1980, while Kerry triumphed in the 14 states with the most. Home prices rose fastest in Kerry's Massachusetts (515 percent) and second slowest in Bush's Texas (89 percent), trailing only nearby Oklahoma. The correlation between low housing inflation and Bush's share of the vote was strong, with a correlation coefficient, or "r," of 0.72.

A rule of thumb in the social sciences is that correlation coefficients of 0.2 are low, 0.4 moderate, and 0.6 high. Thus 0.72 is quite high, especially given the complexity of voting patterns.

To put the influence of housing inflation in perspective, compare its correlation with voting to a more obvious factor influencing who a state votes for: the minority proportion of the state's electorate. Nationally, Bush carried 58 percent of the white vote compared to only 23 percent of the minority vote. Yet the percentage of minority voters in a state correlated with Bush's share of the vote only at the moderate 0.37 level.

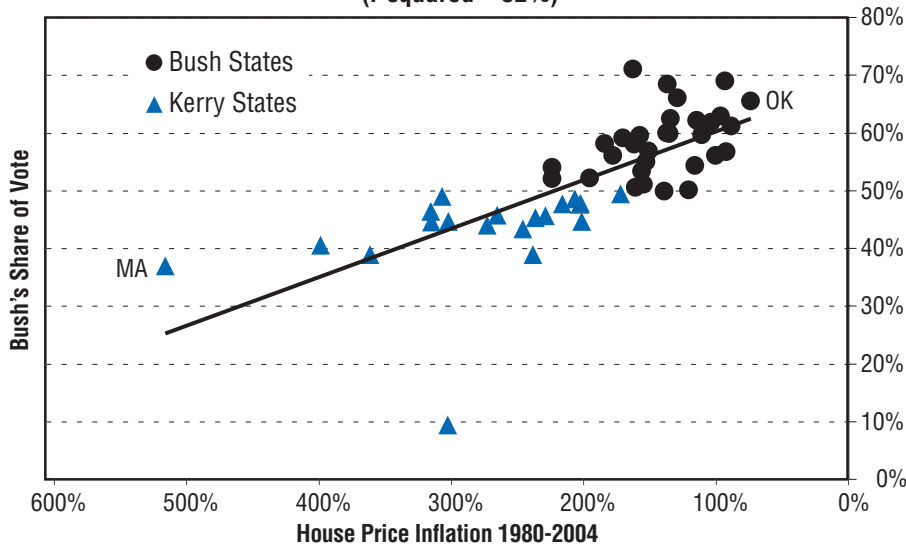
To further help explain the importance of a correlation coefficient, you should multiply the number by itself. Squaring 0.72 reveals that the amount of variation accounted for by the relationship between housing inflation and 2004 voting was 52 percent of the total. In contrast, squaring the 0.37 correlation for minority share shows it can only account for 13 percent of the variance, just one quarter as much as housing inflation can.

Despite the explanatory power of the Dirt Gap and the Mortgage Gap, these concepts have not been widely discussed. Perhaps they are too objective, too emotionally neutral. What people want to hear instead are justifications for why they are ethically and culturally superior to their enemies.

The Mortgage Gap leads, in turn, to a third factor: the Marriage Gap. Sophisticated voting analysts have long noted that the celebrated "gender gap" is dwarfed by the obscure "marriage gap."

## House Prices Rose Faster in Blue States

(r-squared = 52%)



Democratic pollster Stanley Greenberg's multiple regression analysis of the 2004 exit polls revealed:

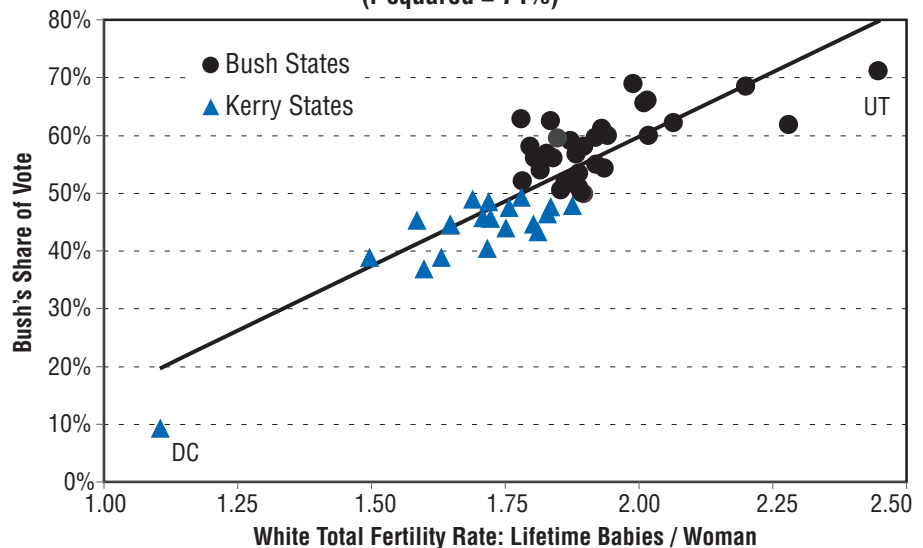
The marriage gap is one of the most important cleavages in electoral politics. This is true even when controlling for other demographic and behavioral factors such as gender, age, race, gun ownership, union household membership, *party identification*, education, income, and church attendance. Controlling for all these other variables, the odds of voting for Kerry were 1.56 times greater if the voter was unmarried than if the voter was married. In contrast, once other demographic and behavioral factors were controlled for, a voter's gender had no significant effect on their likelihood to vote for the Democrat. [Italics mine]

Bush carried 61 percent of married non-Hispanic white women but merely 44 percent of single white females—a 17-point difference. Among white men, Bush won 53 percent of the single and 66 percent of the married guys—a 13-point difference.

Why do I, like Greenberg, concentrate more on analyzing non-Hispanic white voting? First, this allows an apples-to-apples comparison between states. Second, the white vote is the decisive swing vote. Although the media drones on about supposedly decisive minority “swing voters” such as the small Hispanic bloc (only 6.0 percent of all voters in 2004, according to the census), the white bloc was dominant, casting 79 percent of the vote.

And whites are highly diverse politically. Bush's performance among white voters ranged from only 40 percent in Massachusetts and Vermont to 85 percent in Mississippi—a 45-point spread. In contrast, Bush's percentage of blacks varied only from 3 percent in D.C. to 28 percent in Oklahoma—a 25-point range.

### Bush's Share of Vote Correlated Closely with White Fertility (r-squared = 74%)



Third, each state's overall voting behavior is driven primarily by the divergences in marriage and baby-making among whites. Whites appear more sensitive to cost-of-living calculations about marriage and babies. While white parents of small children in Manhattan have a median income of \$284,208, the *NYT* reports, “In comparison, the median income of other Manhattan households with toddlers was \$66,213 for Asians, \$31,171 for blacks and \$25,467 for Hispanic families.” Similarly, demographer Hans Johnson of the Public Policy Institute of California finds that American-born white women in costly California are having babies at a rate of only 1.6 per lifetime, while immigrant Latinas are having 3.7.

The impact of marriage on the Red-Blue divide among states was long difficult to quantify graphically because the government only provides data on “getting married,” yet it's “being married” that drives voters toward the GOP. Many white people get married in Nevada, for example, but the state is only purplish-red because they also get divorced frequently. Next door Utah, however, is the most rock-ribbed Red

State (Bush won 72 percent) because the locals get married and stay married.

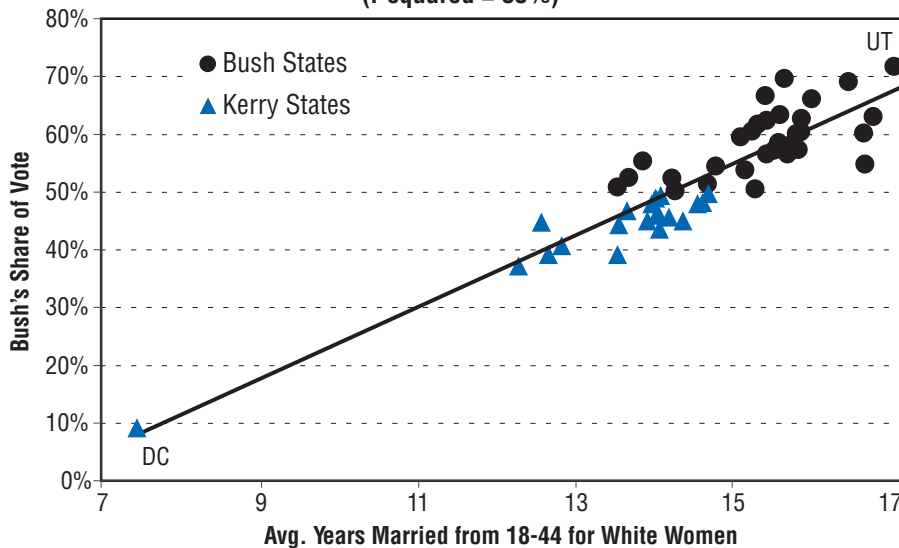
Consequently, I devised a measure called “Years Married” (modeled on Total Fertility) that estimated how many years a woman could expect to be married during her childbearing years of 18-44.

For example, white women in Utah lead the nation by being married an average of 17.0 years during those 27 years from age 18 through 44. In contrast, in liberal Washington D.C., the average white woman is married only 7.4 years. In Massachusetts, where Bush won merely 37 percent, years married average just 12.2.

Applied to white women, this new measure proved to be the single-best predictor imaginable of Bush's share of the vote by state in the last two elections. Bush carried the top 25 states, while Kerry won 16 of the lowest 19.

The 2004 correlation coefficient was a stratospheric 0.91, accounting for an astonishing r-squared equal to 83 percent of total variation in voting by state. This has to be one of the highest correlations for an unexpected factor ever seen in political science.

### Bush's Share of Vote Correlated Closely with Whites Being Married (r-squared = 83%)



Although there are profound cultural differences among states, the Marriage Gap among whites appears to be pushed to a sizable extent by the Mortgage Gap. The cost-of-housing index correlates with “years married” with an r-squared equal to 53 percent. Similarly, the housing inflation rate since 1980 and “years married” correlate at an r-squared equal to 48 percent.

While young couples during the postwar Baby Boom rushed into marriage at very early ages, assuming that with wages high and housing costs low, they could somehow make things work, modern Americans have developed an attitude similar in some ways to Jane Austen’s characters: money should precede marriage. Miss Austen, though, would never have approved of the corollary: that sex, and even children, can precede money.

Sociologists Kathryn Edin and Maria Kefalas conducted a five-year study of 162 low-income white, black, and Hispanic single mothers in Philadelphia. They found that “Marriage, we heard time and again, ought to be reserved for those couples who’ve acquired the symbols of working-class respectability: a mortgage on a modest rowhouse, a reliable car, a

savings account and enough money left over to host a ‘decent’ wedding.”

Little media attention has been paid to the relentless surge in illegitimacy. From 2005 to 2006, the number of babies born to married white women declined 0.4 percent, while the number born to unmarried Hispanic women rose an astonishing 9.6 percent. Across all races, the illegitimacy rate in 2006 was 39 percent, up from 28 percent in 1990. For blacks, it was 71 percent, for Hispanics 50 percent, and for whites 27 percent.

Women in higher social classes are more likely to avoid the troubles of giving birth out of wedlock. But they often postpone marriage and children until they can afford the down payment on a house in a neighborhood with good public schools.

That leads to the fourth and final factor: the Baby Gap. Bush carried 25 of the top 26 states in the “total fertility rate” (expected number of babies per woman per lifetime) among whites, while Kerry was victorious in the bottom 16. In Utah, for instance, white women in 2002 were having babies at a pace equivalent to 2.45 per lifetime. In the District of Columbia, white women average only 1.11 babies.

The correlation between white total fertility and Bush’s performance produced an impressive r-squared of 74 percent. In a 2006 paper entitled “The ‘Second Demographic Transition’ in the US,” demographers Ron J. Lesthaeghe and Lisa Neidert of the University of Michigan confirmed the findings that I first published in my “Baby Gap” article in *The American Conservative* in 2004: the white total fertility rate correlates extraordinarily well with whether a state voted for Bush or Kerry. They note that this provides “to our knowledge one of the highest spatial correlations between demographic and voting behavior on record.”

Yet the Baby Gap appears to be somewhat less important than the Marriage Gap. Nevertheless, together they proved extraordinarily powerful in explaining Bush’s performance. Their combined r-squared: 88 percent.

Affordable family formation won’t predict who will win this November. But it offers profound implications for long-range political strategies. For example, the late housing bubble, over which Republicans George W. Bush and Alan Greenspan complacently presided, reduced the affordability of family formation, which should help the Democrats in the long run.

This theory suggests that, in order to encourage marriage and children among voters, Republicans should pursue policies that raise wages, lower demand for houses, and keep the public schools from eroding further. The most obvious way to move the country toward a more Republican future is to restrict immigration. This revamped GOP could then position itself as the party of more weddings and more babies, while describing the Democrats, with some accuracy, as the party of dying alone. ■

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# Balance Sheet of Power

Globalization hasn't rewritten the laws of economics. State-on-state competition still rules.

By Andrew A. Michta

LAST NOVEMBER, Citigroup announced the sale of a 4.9 percent stake for \$7.5 billion to Abu Dhabi Investment Authority. It's now seeking a \$1-billion infusion from Kuwait and \$9 billion from China. Soon after, Beijing bought 9.9 percent of Morgan Stanley for \$5 billion, and Bear Stearns swapped \$1-billion stakes with China's CITIC Securities Co. Ltd, a state-owned investment company. Also in December, Singapore's Temasek Holdings took a \$4.4 billion stake in Merrill Lynch, with an option to invest an additional \$600 million. The bleeding investment giant is seeking another \$4 billion from the Arabs.

Americans would surely protest if their own government started buying up domestic banks and companies, but they offer no objection when foreign governments do just that. They have been conditioned by the reigning ideology of globalization to reject any form of economic nationalism as isolationist. Dogma has overtaken good sense.

But globalization is not delivering on its bright promise of "complex interdependence." Traditional state-on-state competition is fast re-emerging from its post-Cold War lull and with it, historically proven ideas about what constitutes economic power: a strong industrial base producing competitive goods, a high savings rate and ample foreign exchange reserves, innovative domestic industries, and a highly skilled and educated labor force steeped in the country's technological culture. As in the past, rising economic power generates confident nationalism and produces a

strategic assertiveness, first regionally, then globally.

The United States, formerly the premier industrial power and creditor to the world, is ripe for a corporate takeover from abroad. As the aftershocks of the mortgage crisis continue to reverberate through the markets, America is awaking to the reality of its shrinking industrial base. Only 12.6 percent of GDP came from manufacturing in 2006. We face exploding trade and fiscal deficits, a \$9-trillion national debt, and a flagging currency. Decades of deindustrialization and outsourcing for the sake of short-term profit have even begun to cut into the mainstay of our national security: our defense sector. The prospect of foreign control in critical areas of the economy is shaping up to be the greatest security challenge this country has ever encountered.

Last year, the dollar lost 7.5 percent of its value according to the Federal Reserve's trade-weighted dollar index. It declined 9.5 percent against the euro in 2007, following a 10.2 percent drop in 2006, and reached parity with the Canadian dollar. With our low savings rate and continued deficit spending, the U.S. must import capital at an average rate of \$3 billion per day. Without that daily injection from abroad, our government and businesses would lack the money to operate.

America funds its economy, runs its government, and conducts its wars on a giant foreign-owned credit card. And contrary to received globalist wisdom, the issue of who happens to have the largest dollar holdings is vital to national security.

We owe trillions of dollars to China, Japan, and the oil-producing countries in the Middle East. According to China's central bank, in the past year China added \$461.9 billion to its foreign exchange reserves, which stand at over \$1.5 trillion above all other nations—a net increase of over 43 percent from its 2006 record. In contrast, U.S. foreign exchange reserves hover at around \$90 billion, below Brazil, Malaysia, and Mexico.

Despite skyrocketing energy prices, persistent trade deficits, and federal borrowing out of control, the U.S. continues to incur obligations with its creditors at a breathtaking pace. Now all of those states, armed with cheap dollars, can go shopping at the discounter's deal of the century: the "Wal-Mart" of American corporations.

Over the past decade, foreign governments have been converting their dollar holdings into investment funds to acquire banks, companies, and real estate in the United States and elsewhere in the West. These sovereign-wealth funds have been an important and rather secretive force in global speculation. They are in effect the investment arms of governments, funded by massive trade surpluses and record oil revenues. According to the *LA Times*, there are now an estimated 20 sovereign-wealth funds in the world, with total assets estimated at between \$2 trillion to \$3 trillion. The largest are believed to be owned by China, Russia, Abu Dhabi, Norway, Singapore, and Kuwait. Since the subprime mortgage crisis began, they have risked nearly \$69

billion on recapitalizing investment banks. *The Economist* reports that these funds—essentially foreign governments—“have deftly played the role of savior just when Western banks have been exposed as the Achilles heel of the global finance system.”

America’s transformation into a sharecropper economy is well underway. According to Capital IQ, in 2007, foreign buyers spent \$294 billion on more than 600 mergers and acquisitions involving American banks and companies—the equivalent of what foreigners spent on U.S. assets in the past three years combined. And there is more to come. Morgan Stanley projects that the value of foreign government-owned sovereign-wealth funds could reach \$17.5 trillion in the next ten years—roughly \$4.3 trillion more than the total U.S. GDP in 2006.

That may prove to be a conservative estimate. The McKinsey Global Institute reports that in the past ten years Asian central banks have reported the growth of reserves at an astonishing 20 percent a year, an increase matched by banks in oil-rich countries. In 2007, total foreign bank reserves approached \$7 trillion. Now that money can be spent on discounted U.S. assets by nations that do not share the American commitment to democracy and basic human rights.

Rising competitors with the United States—China in particular—will soon be well placed to fundamentally change the balance of economic power. Globalism will finally have to surrender to the reality of international power politics.

The consequences of such a fundamental re-ordering of the world’s financial hierarchy will be comparable to the effects of the great, system-transforming wars of the past. The price of defeat is the loss of control over a nation’s economy and hence its political destiny. Instead of prospering in the new world of “complex interdependence,” the

losers will learn what it means for their security to depend on others for capital and technology. We may believe the 21st century to be a postmodern era; most of the world, however, begs to differ.

Economists who point out the grave implications of this impending shift in the great power game are accused of scare-mongering. Efforts to tighten the guidelines for approval of foreign acquisitions by the inter-agency Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States, while supported by some in Congress, have been criticized as “anti-free trade” isolationist paranoia. The public is continually told that while deficits may be an unpleasant reality, in this Friedmanesque “flat world” of ours, the U.S. can count on attracting foreign capital to fund its borrowing almost indefinitely.

ACCORDING TO CAPITAL IQ, IN 2007, **FOREIGN BUYERS SPENT \$294 BILLION ON MORE THAN 600 MERGERS AND ACQUISITIONS** INVOLVING AMERICAN BANKS AND COMPANIES.

That is, of course, a good thing—a sign of America’s perceived strength abroad, a vote of global confidence in the stability of our economy. But by this logic, there is no meaningful difference in terms of power relations between the creditor and the debtor, just as allegedly there is no difference between energy suppliers and energy consumers, for they are both bound by the same market.

To believe this is to ignore the most basic tenets of the relationship between economic strength and national security. To insist that that our indebtedness does not give dangerous political leverage to foreign creditors is to pretend that the fundamental rules of inter-state relations no longer apply and that savings and bankruptcy are simply two sides of the same coin. Upon this delusion, we have wagered American security.

The staggering volume of dollar holdings outside the U.S., the precipitous decline in the value our currency, and the dismantling of our domestic industries combine to create a perfect storm that could sweep aside our global pre-eminence. America’s foreign creditors are in a strong position to displace the U.S. from the center of world affairs not through military force but through the acquisition of assets.

For decades, the U.S. has staked its national security on the unyielding primacy of its defense technology, where the qualitative edge compensates for the manpower limitations inherent in our professional military. But even here, globalization has been making unwelcome inroads. Today the U.S. remains the undisputed leader, although our ability to rely on domestic industry to

build the critical weapon systems is coming into question. Defense technology requires not only strong design and engineering, but also a robust manufacturing base. During the Cold War, the Soviet Union produced groundbreaking research through outstanding mathematicians, physicists, and computer programmers, but it was unable to translate those designs into working weapon systems that could match the United States. In the end, it did not really matter how sophisticated their chip design was if the Soviets could not produce a consistently performing silicon wafer.

Is the United States in that position today? No, but our competitors are beginning to close the technology gap. An ever greater portion of the defense industry’s innovation is driven by the civilian sector, especially in IT and biotechnology fields. The prospect of

foreign-government ownership of segments of American industries that are related—even indirectly—to the defense sector ought to give us all pause. Should we be sanguine as, together with Bain Capital in a \$2.2 billion deal, the Chinese firm Huawei Technologies takes an “undisclosed minority position” in the communications networking group 3Com Corp—a U.S. company whose focus is on sensitive communications networks? Can America be sure that even minority foreign government ownership of a U.S. contractor will not give China access to vital defense technology? Do we believe that corporate managers will remain oblivious to the preferences of their foreign stakeholders? Should we not care if critical defense contractors move to internationalize a portion of their capacity?

We are spending close to \$2 billion a day on defense, and like all government agency budgets, the Defense Department budget is funded through runaway borrowing. Yet the Bush administration entertains plans to remain in Iraq and Afghanistan for decades, sets up a new combatant command in Africa, and prepares its contingency options against Iran and in the event of an explosion in Pakistan. We seem determined to expand our military commitments regardless of our declining ability to pay for them, as though we believed that the basics of money and power no longer apply.

The world may appear flat in a best-selling book or in a lecture delivered after dinner at a rotary club, but it is full of peaks and valleys. For some states the globe is filled with new opportunities for national greatness. For others it may already be sloping sharply downwards. State-on-state economic competition, whether local or global, has never gone away.

After World War II, the U.S. was uniquely positioned to lead the competition. But the national economic interest

**President Bush and Vice President Cheney’s public and private comments disparaging the Dec. 3 National Intelligence Estimate on Iran have significantly increased the animosity of intelligence professionals toward the White House.**

The dismissive comments that the intelligence community is an “independent” arm of government and that the administration does not necessarily embrace its judgments is being seen as a repudiation of the entire intelligence process, which has been painfully rebuilt in the aftermath of the heavily politicized 2002 Iraq NIE. Some senior officers at the Pentagon are also beginning to suspect that the president is still determined to initiate military action against Tehran, despite their advice that such an attack would not serve the national interest and would, in fact, be counter-productive. Both the CIA and the Director National Intelligence office have been informed privately by their foreign counterparts of critical off-the-record comments made by President Bush during his recent Middle East tour. Bush told both the Israelis and the Saudis that he does not accept the NIE key finding that Iran has abandoned its development of nuclear weapons, adding his personal belief that the program has been re-instated. The Israelis conveniently provided their own evidence to support the president’s contention, information that had previously been reviewed and rejected by the DNI’s office. Israel has also been supporting an aggressive lobbying campaign in the U.S. to undermine the findings of the NIE, using its friends in the media and Congress. Some recent private comments made by Dick Cheney have also been reported back to CIA and the intelligence chiefs at the Pentagon. Cheney has been telling his contacts and supporters that the intelligence community has “betrayed” the president and that some of its leaders are “traitors.” When the use of that epithet was revealed, the intensity of the reaction was predictable, with a number of senior officers stating their intention to resign if a war were to start.



**It is unlikely that Bush would order military action against Iran without a specific *casus belli* such as the seizure of U.S. vessels in the Persian Gulf.**

But Tel Aviv and Washington have discussed a scenario by which the Israelis would attack first and then be backed up by the U.S. in a bombing campaign directed against Iran’s nuclear infrastructure. The White House has been setting the stage by quietly disseminating the view that the “Israelis are out of control” and thus cannot be dissuaded from taking decisive action against Tehran. This suggests that the Israelis would be encouraged to initiate unilateral strikes against Iran with the U.S. claiming to have no choice but to support them. It should be noted that there does not appear to be any hard operational planning for such an attack, which is currently a “what if.” But Dick Cheney recently told an associate that Iran is such a significant threat that President Bush cannot leave office without taking action for fear of being replaced by a “Hillary Clinton who will not make the hard decision.”

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has been sacrificed to an ideology that sees the new world as one market, but fails to recognize that today, as always, state power is key, and governments intervene in investment and currency decisions to maximize their countries' strength. Even in a globalized system, capital, knowledge, and technology flow to the most adept players, separating winners from losers, forging new great powers and undoing old ones.

## **ECONOMIC STRENGTH AND SOUND MONEY, BOTH UNDERPINNING A ROBUST MILITARY, ARE AS CRITICAL TODAY AND AS AT ANY POINT IN HISTORY.**

Before we allow our leaders to reassure us yet again that the United States will remain the dominant power spreading democracy across the globe, we should at least for a moment consider the fundamentals.

Can any state call itself a great power while it lives on borrowed money—its national debt out of control, its infrastructure crumbling, and its core industries disappearing offshore as it forfeits the technological culture it took generations to develop?

Can the United States look with confidence to a future in which the dollar is no longer accepted in international transactions, in which our defense budget can only be funded through promissory notes, and in which—having staked our security on cutting-edge technology—we no longer have the autonomous capacity to manufacture the most advanced weapon systems?

If we fail, the world will lose its balance. A bankrupt America cannot stabilize its position in the fast changing global order, an environment in which China contends for preeminence, where India is rapidly becoming another leading Asian player, and countries such as Russia and Brazil are catching up with European leaders.

Globalization has not reinvented the rules of international relations. It is taking the United States back into the future—into a time where sovereign economic strength will define international status in much the same way it has for centuries. We are about to rediscover the most basic principle of political realism: the size of the GDP tells an incomplete story, for national power without a structurally sound industrial

economy is an illusion. To pretend otherwise, as the United States policy elites have done for years now, is an exercise in self-delusion. The greatest Republic in history is going on the auction block.

Since the U.S. has not been beaten at the global economic game since the triumph of free-market ideas, the radical decline of America's position seems unlikely. But just such a change is coming on fast. If our current economic policy does not change, we will live in growing insecurity, dependent on U.S. debt holders and in fear that they may cut off our credit. In the long run, a country with a large military but economic feet of clay will not endure.

Even at this late stage, we have a choice: we can recognize what is at stake, or we can continue to delude ourselves that what is happening is just the normal global business cycle and represents no threat. After all, officials connected to China Investment Corporation have reassured us that they plan to buy only minority stakes in U.S. companies and that they will avoid airlines, telecommunications and—after the backlash that followed the failed bid by China's nationally-owned CNOOC oil company to buy UNOCAL—oil companies. For now.

The globalist mantras that a national manufacturing base no longer matters, that the traditional export-import calculus no longer applies, that our collapsing currency only makes our exports more competitive, and that our national debt is but a sign of continued foreign confidence in our economy ring hollow. They require the sort of mental dexterity that can no longer be mustered in the face of facts.

The international order taking shape today amidst considerable flux and uncertainty is neither unipolar, as neo-conservatives would have us believe, or one of supranationally managed multipolarity, as liberals would have wanted it. Economic strength and sound money, both underpinning a robust military, are as critical today and as at any point in history. A country that pretends otherwise does so at its own peril.

The panacea is not protectionism or rejection of the global market. It is the opposite—to start competing on terms others have chosen: maximizing energy independence, insisting on strict market reciprocity, and putting national interest ahead of a short-term uptick in the corporate balance sheet. Great nations cannot be built on credit. The essentials of what makes a power great remain constant: a vibrant industrial base, technological leadership, and cutting-edge exports. Those first lessons of traditional realist thinking are about to be taught to America again. ■

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# GOP Panhandling

John McCain's moment in the sun

By A.G. Gancarski

BRAVING TORRENTIAL RAIN, a crowd of 700 Republican regulars gathered at the University of North Florida in Jacksonville to hear the winner of that day's Nevada caucus, Mitt Romney. He had traded his usual suit jacket for rolled-up sleeves; the effect was Ward Cleaver on a Saturday afternoon.

"If you want the nomination, and you want to win the presidency," Romney declared, "you've got to get Florida." It was a grim admission: Romney's largely self-financed campaign and political future depended on a state where people normally come to spend their children's inheritance and die.

Unlike Rudy Giuliani, Romney didn't choose a Florida-or-bust approach. He was backed into it after his early-state strategy was blown away by Mike Huckabee's surprise triumph in Iowa and John McCain's rise from the dead in New Hampshire. In the end, he came up five points short.

The Sunshine State was never going to be an easy conquest. It would be a close-run race, fought region by region. A Romney aide confided that they "had to win" north Florida to have any chance because of the perceived strength of McCain and Giuliani elsewhere.

With this in mind, Romney relied on his golden touch with party insiders and had snagged impressive North Florida endorsements well before this event. But endorsements don't guarantee enthusiasm.

UNF president and former two-term Jacksonville mayor John Delaney, a prototypical Jeb Bush Republican,

described Romney as the compromise choice. "Most of the local GOP hierarchy had not aligned with any campaign by early fall," he said. "Each of the major candidates had been through to meet with the group and make their pitch. Still no commitments. As everyone understands, each candidate has flaws to go with their strengths."

As the primary approached, Delaney related, "the rest of the state began to wonder where the Jacksonville people were. So our group, informal as it was, asked each campaign to make a one-hour pitch, back to back. We met on one day with representatives from the Thompson, Romney, McCain, and Giuliani campaigns—the 'Big Four.' The group decided that moving en masse [to maximize impact] was best."

But winning over the local party machine proved less difficult for Romney than winning the hearts of common people. At the Jacksonville MLK Day parade, he attempted to chat up clusters of unkempt teenagers wearing flannel pajama pants and balancing babies on their hips. "Who let the dogs out? Whoop! Whoop!" Mitt barked, attempting to flash up his street cred with an awkward reference to the Baha Men's chart hit from eight years ago. Later, talking to a young black mother, Romney said to her baby, "Oh, you've got some bling bling on." Clearly, the Massachusetts governor was out of his element.

But he had competition for offending local sensibilities. Mike Huckabee has seemed snakebit since his decision to barnstorm South Carolina with wizened

professional wrestler Ric Flair, who at a rally in Colombia stood on the stage kissing his bottle-blond trophy wife while the candidate tried to deliver his stump speech.

In Jacksonville, Huckabee's hard luck struck again at the Trinity Baptist Church where he was scheduled to preach the Sunday before the primary. Trinity's long-serving pastor had recently been convicted of child molestation. As the media focused on this unpleasantness, the campaign veered uneasily between saying that the engagement had been cancelled and claiming that it had never been scheduled.

Huckabee opted to address the Trinitarians by telephone and spent Sunday afternoon at a rally in the courtyard of the Jacksonville Landing, a mall on the banks of the St. John's River. The sun-soaked crowd—flush with a couple hundred so-called "Wal-Mart Republicans," many of whom came from nearby states—was receptive but not rapturous.

Struggling in the polls, Huckabee lunged desperately toward folksy John Edwards territory. He unconvincingly laid into Fair Tax critics, opining that he was "tired of the boobirds," who inexplicably oppose "taxes so simple that a seven year old running a lemonade stand can understand." Would these kids be collecting 30 cents for the federal government for each glass they sold? Huckabee didn't say. After finishing his pitch, he dutifully strapped on the bass guitar and played "Brown Eyed Girl" with a local band. The bassline didn't quite match the drums.

The optimistic energy that once characterized Huckabee's campaign had dissipated. He looked like a weary veteran playing out the string—but his persistence came at a high price for Romney, who needed to do well in the panhandle and other heavily evangelical areas Huckabee targeted.

If his competitors' campaigns were uninspiring, Giuliani's Florida gamble proved entirely futile. The national media presented the collapse of Rudy2008 as a surprise. But those who saw his campaign on a daily basis knew better.

He had once owned Florida in the polls, enjoying twice the support of the rest of the field. But as they racked up wins, his numbers tumbled, and Giuliani responded by doing what so many losing pols do—pandering to his perception of the base. He ended up betting his entire mismanaged operation on a last-ditch attempt to create mania for “national catastrophic insurance.” In the waning hours of his first and last stand, Rudy was equal parts Willy Loman and George Costanza.

On an overcast Saturday afternoon the weekend before the primary, in a smallish ballroom at the Orlando Rosen Centre Hotel, his campaign hosted a “Women For Rudy” event. Giuliani ran late, fittingly enough.

“I’ve accomplished big things, and we need a president who can accomplish big things,” he grasped, with the conviction of a man who had run out of ideas months before. “We have to think about great goals for this country” like “putting the first person on Mars.” It was clear that Rudy’s campaign had sunk.

Whatever political capital America’s Mayor might have amassed since 9/11 was spent by John McCain, who out-hawked him at every turn, even hosting a “national security roundtable” with former CIA director and neocon darling James Woolsey on the eve of the primary. Riding a wave of well-timed

endorsements from GOP heavy hitters Gov. Charlie Crist and Sen. Mel Martinez, McCain opted to skip the State of the Union address for one more pivotal tour of the major Florida media markets, starting in the northeast corner of the state. Romney traveled the same circuit, though in reverse, hitting Jacksonville after sundown.

The effect created might have been that of a title fight—two heavyweight contenders going toe-to-toe for the same prize. But the McCain departure rally felt more like an exhibition than a thriller. Hastily organized, with no more than 100 people in attendance at a remote location, it seemed to diminish his candidacy at the worst possible time. Two of McCain’s Prada-heeled staffers gamely distributed “Mac Is Back” placards to the ex-Marines and soccer moms, but signs outnumbered people. There were barely enough McCainiacs to fill the rope line.

As the dreary ‘80s hit “Danger Zone” blared for the umpteenth time, I conversed with 88-year-old Ted Boutwell, a veteran in the Cotton Hill mode who, his daughter told me, “was one of the original Top Guns” in World War II. The steely-eyed Boutwell sat in a lawn chair, sporting a wool coat and ski hat. Asked why he supported McCain, he smiled inscrutably, chuckled, then rasped, “I don’t want to say why—it wouldn’t be appropriate in mixed company.”

If McCain’s departure struck a desultory note, Romney’s arrival a few hours later was as well-run and energy-infused as the candidate could hope. As Motown hits played, supporters milled about smiling, pointing, greeting one another like it was Wednesday night at church. This was the most congenial crowd by far, but it was a very specific sort of friendliness, rooted in what Bill Bradley called “white skin privilege.”

Mitt Romney is the squarest man to run for the presidency since, well,

George Romney. And primary crowds are often like their candidates. Here was an abundance of well-scrubbed families and couples in preppy casual wear—folks with clean credit and cleaner consciences. More than 400 materialized for Romney’s farewell: no Asians or Hispanics, two blacks (a father and a son), and a couple of white girls who looked like they’d been to Hot Topic at least once.

The definitive scene: a newlywed couple making giddy thumbs-up poses for their digital camera, holding prefab Romney signs. Sometimes, you see people doing things like this ironically. But Romneyworld is an irony-free zone.

When the candidate’s charter arrived, the crowd rushed en masse toward the door of the hangar chanting “Go Mitt Go” and brandishing “Mitt’s My Man” signs. From a safe distance, the scene resembled footage of a Nixon ’72 rally.

On the dais, the ever-energetic Romney rapid-fired through his usual 15-minute stump speech—punctuated with his call-and-response riff “They haven’t. We will.” If fatigue had set in for the candidate as it had for the worn-out troupe of reporters accompanying him, it didn’t show.

But Romney’s best efforts weren’t enough. In one sense, his strategy worked: he carried northeast Florida. But he got waxed in Tampa and Miami.

Rallies matter, and Romney put on a good show. He also had a stronger ground operation. But he was unable to take Florida in spite of these advantages—which doesn’t bode well for his chances going out, no matter how many ads he buys.

“You can turn people out, but you can’t turn them on,” Richard Nixon told Anwar Sadat in 1974. In 2008, in Florida, John McCain essentially told Mitt Romney the same thing. ■

*A.G. Gancarski writes from Jacksonville, Fla.*

# Losing One for the Gipper

Feted as the consensus conservative champion who would fill the void left by the other candidates, Fred Thompson withdrew from the presidential race devoid

of electoral success. Finishing behind him in South Carolina, and apparently incapable of winning any closely contested election, was Mitt Romney, the defender of the “three-legged stool” approach to coalition building. Both portrayed themselves as defenders of the “Reagan coalition” and vehemently rejected references to its demise from Ed Rollins, Mike Huckabee’s campaign chair.

But before they cast themselves as twin guardians of Reagan’s inheritance, it is a pity that no one pointed out the obvious: that trust had been squandered by the current administration long before Romney and Thompson announced their intentions.

Reagan reverie has been a powerful factor in shaping coverage of the Republican contenders in the conservative media. And the candidates’ failure to measure up to this mythologized standard has been a major cause of voters’ dissatisfaction with the available choices. According to a Strategic Vision poll, three-quarters of Republican voters in a dozen early states wanted a nominee in the “mold” of Ronald Reagan and saw that as something very different from the office’s current occupant.

Understandably, given the distorting and corrupting effects of the Bush administration’s policies, the candidates have been wrapping themselves in the former president’s mantle at every opportunity, beginning at one of the first debates of 2007 at the Reagan Presidential Library, in which Reagan’s name was invoked 19 times.

Romney is a recent convert, eagerly uttering truisms about the ills of the welfare state as if they were bold new ideas and dubbing his proposal for a series of new free-trade agreements the “Reagan Zone of Economic Freedom.” Thompson, who cast one of his final Senate votes to create the vast Department of Homeland Security, has served up warmed-over platitudes about federalism and limited government, which are as sound in principle as they are removed from what Republicans have done in Washington for the past ten years. Critics have assailed Romney for his lack of conviction, and others have attacked Thompson’s dour, uninspired campaigning, but these are not the principal reasons both failed even in those contests in which they made strong efforts to compete.

The real problem with their nostalgia campaigns is that the Republican Party they have been trying to take over from President Bush has changed several times since it could reasonably be called the “Reagan coalition.” Twenty-year-old talking points no longer match the interests and composition of most of the different factions. The party has changed, as have the policies embraced first by the leaders of the coalition and then by their constituents.

After Thompson’s withdrawal, Romney acknowledged their common strategy: “He also was one of the other—probably the only one of the field—that focused on pulling together the old Reagan coalition, if you will, the conservative coalition of social, economic, and foreign-policy conservatives. And so his

leaving the race is sad for those who were big fans of his, but it probably helps my effort in terms of bringing together those Reagan coalition individuals, and it probably will be a bit of a boost for me.”

Given the similarity of their messages, Romney’s hopes to benefit from Thompson’s departure and become the consensus Reaganite of the race seemed reasonable at first. But according to the second-choice preferences of Thompson supporters in Florida, they were more likely to support Romney’s chief rival, John McCain, than they were to support the other main defender of the “house that Reagan built.” The primary’s results bore that out.

Likewise, at the polls in every contested race except Romney’s native Michigan, voters have embraced the candidates, McCain and Huckabee, most explicitly unlike him and also most unsatisfying to the party and movement leadership. In a way, it is strangely fitting that McCain should benefit from Thompson’s exit, since the policies that have done the most in recent years to dynamite the coalition Thompson hoped to hold together were the two policies with which John McCain has most strongly identified himself: the war in Iraq and amnesty for illegal immigrants.

Having largely abandoned prudence in government over the last seven years, leading Republicans have been trying to tap into the memory of a time when conservatism, competence, and electoral success co-existed for their party. As Romney and Thompson have discovered, however, no amount of longing for a past era can undo the damage of recent years. Part of the pain of returning to what once was is the realization that it cannot be summoned up again through mere words. It must be rebuilt. ■

# Arts & Letters

## FILM

[Juno]

### Survival of the Hippest

By Steve Sailer

LAST FALL, I received a half-dozen invitations to screenings of a “quirky” comedy about a “whip-smart” pregnant teen hipsterette who plans to give her baby up for adoption by an affluent couple. With my finger planted firmly nowhere near the pulse of popular opinion, I tossed each one out, thinking, “To listen to teens with attitude, for this I need to leave the house?”

So, in the wake of “Juno’s” Academy Award nominations for Best Picture, Director (Jason Reitman of “Thank You for Smoking”), Actress (petite 20-year-old Ellen Page), and Original Screenwriter (“Diablo Cody,” which is the pole name of 29-year-old self-promoter Brook Busey, whose confessional blog became popular when she started working as a stripper), I ended up paying to see it.

Juno, a cute tomboy who dresses in flannel shirts like Nirvana’s Kurt Cobain and has a snarky pop-culture reference ready for every situation, turned out to be just as insufferable as I had expected. If she’s so whip-smart, why did she get so pregnant after one evening with a bright but baffled cross-country runner (the subversively blond and bland Michael Cera from “Superbad”) with whom she says she’s just friends?

Fortunately, my wife, who admired “Juno” greatly, patiently explained to me

the film’s considerable subtleties until even my clueless male brain could begin to grasp them.

First, though, let’s dispose of the controversy over the purported politics of “Juno.” Is Juno betraying feminism by choosing adoption over abortion? Sure. Yet there’s no mystery why Hollywood heroines (as in the recent “Knocked Up” and “Waitress”) almost never have abortions: because babies are adorable and abortions are hideous. Nobody—including, and perhaps especially, pro-choice ideologues—wants to think visually about abortion.

What *is* interesting is how Cody’s semi-autobiographical screenplay undermines teen-movie status clichés about attractive but moronic jocks and cheerleaders lording it over the brilliant but socially oppressed outcasts who presumably get their revenge by moving downtown and writing screenplays about high school.

This conventional dichotomy between the successful versus the cool is embodied in the infertile couple that Juno finds to adopt her baby. Jennifer Garner plays the yuppie wife who maintains a spotless McMansion in a gated community while also working long hours in a corporate career. Jason Bateman is her slacker husband, a grunge guitarist turned advertising jingle composer who sees in Juno a kindred spirit with whom he can debate whether the greatest year in rock music history was 1977 (the Sex Pistols and the Clash) or 1993 (Liz Phair’s “Exile in Guyville”).

Indeed, Juno’s personality appears modeled on Phair’s complex combination of masculine power-chording indie cred, feminine inner self, and shocking statements calibrated to draw notice. That’s only natural because the screenwriter was 16 and living in Chicago’s suburbs when Phair’s second album

“Whip-Smart” came out. Phair was everything Cody must have wanted to be: famous, hip, talented, sexy, and living downtown in Wicker Park, the “Guyville” where all the cool guys in Chicago punk bands hung out.

As Garner’s adoptive mother-to-be obsesses over which shade of medium yellow to paint the nursery, her husband starts to feel like an exile in girlville. Talking to a maverick like Juno makes him wonder whether he should move back downtown and get a loft.

Yet the one thing today’s youth hates more than being uncool is parents divorcing. When it comes to raising her baby, Juno realizes, being a soulless corporate drone is a good thing. Kids these days want parents to be boring. The shock helps Juno begin to understand herself better.

As “Juno” reveals, the run-of-the-mill teen nonconformist is, as the screenwriter finally realized about herself in college, “a noisy, dramatic attention whore.” Cody is too recognition-starved to stick to the party line about how the alterna-kids are free spirits. Instead, she’s made herself a celebrity by spilling the beans about punkette girls like herself and Juno. Why do they tell guys that their three favorite bands are (to quote Juno) “Iggy Pop & the Stooges, Patti Smith, and the Runaways?” Because, to over-generalize, pretending to obsess over old pop culture minutiae makes smart boys notice them and it gives shy boys something to talk about with them.

So why did Juno get pregnant? The same reason: for attention. At her middle-class school, high-IQ pregnant girls giving their babies up for adoption are as interesting to the masses as ivory-billed woodpeckers. ■

Rated PG-13 for mature thematic material, sexual content and language.



## BOOKS

[*What's So Great About Christianity*, Dinesh D'Souza, Regnery, 348 pages]

# What's So Great About Atheism?

By Peter W. Wood

INTO THE MAELSTROM of festering atheists, sneering critics of Christians, biological reductionists, and secular salvationists lately arrived from the denuded shores of Marxism to proffer their advice on forestry steps the intrepid missionary. That Dinesh D'Souza is an Indian-American raised in Bombay (now Mumbai), who arrived in the United States at age 17 (in 1978), only adds to the flavor of his fetching defense of Christianity. The Christian message has always been in transit, from Jesus' mysterious comings and goings among Galilean hamlets to the fanning out of Western emissaries to the Congo and the cannibal isles of the South Pacific.

So it makes a certain sense that a Catholic from India whose Hindu ancestors were more or less coerced into Christianity by the Portuguese colonizers of Goa should answer deracinated Western intellectuals who have declared God dead—yet again. Friedrich Nietzsche, of course, offered that diagnosis some 125 years ago. Today's atheist crowd provides thinner gruel: God is an unnecessary hypothesis; God is a mass delusion; God is an evolutionary vestige from the time when our ancestors needed to buck themselves up in the face of saber-toothed tigers.

Some of today's prominent atheists find the staying power of the Christian God particularly annoying. Christopher Hitchens says all religions are "equally

demented," but it takes the God of the Torah and the Gospels to move him to highest dudgeon. As D'Souza puts it, "Christianity is typically the focus of atheist moral critique." The bill of particulars includes the medieval crusades, the Inquisition, the Thirty Years War, resistance to scientific progress, anti-Semitism, forced conversions, and, well, much more. Some atheists also contrive to blame Christianity for the mass murders of the decidedly un-Christian Hitler and Stalin. D'Souza quotes Sam Harris's *End of Faith*: "the Holocaust marked the culmination of ... two hundred years of Christian fulminating against the Jews." Stalin, according to Harris, contrived a "political religion" modeled on, of course, Christianity.

D'Souza nicely points out the double standard employed by atheists when they argue in this vein: "[Steven] Weinberg apparently believes that the crimes of religious regimes reflect the true face of religion, while the crimes of atheist regimes represent a distortion of the atheist spirit of rational and scientific inquiry."

D'SOUZA DEPICTS THE **HOSTILITY TOWARD CHRISTIANITY** OF SOME ATHEISTIC SCIENTISTS AS **A BIT CHURLISH** IN LIGHT OF THEIR DEPENDENCE ON THE UNDERLYING IDEA THAT **THE UNIVERSE IS AN ORDERLY, LAW-GOVERNED PLACE.**

*What's So Great About Christianity* is no fine-tuned theological argument. D'Souza has chosen to take on the whole tribe of atheists at once, which is like challenging a swarm of gnats. Accordingly, the book consists of many small chapters, each of which takes aim at a separate department of gnatdom. Did Christians persecute Galileo? See Chapter 10, where "the whole [atheist] melodrama of science in conflict with religion is exploded." By D'Souza's reckoning, Galileo only got in trouble when he ventured beyond the available facts in his support of the Copernican model of the universe. All good Cardinal Belarmine of the Inquisition wanted in 1616 was crisp scientific demonstration:

"I shall not believe that there are such proofs [of heliocentrism] until they are shown to me."

In this account, Galileo enjoyed respectful relations with the Church and, contrary to "atheist propagandists...[was] never charged with heresy, and was never placed in a dungeon or tortured in any way." D'Souza thus pegs the bad faith of many atheist writers, who distort the historical record.

D'Souza depicts the hostility toward Christianity of some atheistic scientists as a bit churlish in light of their dependence on the underlying metaphysical idea that the universe is an orderly, law-governed place open to human understanding. There is no scientific reason for the universe to be like that. As D'Souza observes, "It is easy to imagine a universe in which conditions change unpredictably from instant to instant, or even a universe in which things pop in and out of existence." D'Souza proposes that Christianity posited the idea of a "unified, ordered, and accessible universe" that gives science its warrant.

D'Souza argues much of his case against atheists with short sharp stabs. His points are always lucid but also likely to leave even mildly skeptical readers with an unresolved set of "but what about...?" questions. The atheist at the dissecting table can raise his scalpel and say, "Well and good. I'm grateful that the Christian presumption about logos got the ball rolling for Roger Bacon, but these days we can perfectly hypothesize an orderly universe without encumbering ourselves with God."

Or we could imagine the physicist at CERN pondering the bubble tracks of mere nothings smashing into each other. "Well indeed," he might say, "conditions

do change unpredictably from instant to instant, and things pop in and out of existence all the time. Here's proof."

Such ripostes are answerable, but D'Souza is the Light Horse Harry, not the General Grant, of Christian apologists. Those who want to stand and fight for a particular point can find virtually all of his arguments developed at book length by other writers. D'Souza limits himself to three main arguments. Chapter one: The secularists are wrong; Christianity is thriving. Chapter 2: Religion aids human survival ("Atheism is a bit like homosexuality: one is not sure where it fits into a doctrine of natural selection.") Chapter 4: Atheists seek to propagate their non-faith through schools," where religion can be pushed "outside the bounds of acceptable debate." (Chapter 3 just reminds us that atheists are on the move.)

Stenger, and others might have some merit and look in vain to church leaders for a serious and informed Christian reply. But contrary to the hopes he expresses in the preface, D'Souza's *What's So Great About Christianity* is probably not the book to win over people relaxed in their skepticism. He calls on "unbelievers" not to read the book as "merely an intellectual exercise" but to take it as practical advice. "How long do you intend to continue this joyless search for joy?" he asks. And then the hard sell: "Death forces upon you a choice that you cannot escape. You must choose God or reject Him, because when you die all abstentions are counted as 'no' votes."

I suspect that such language appeals more to convinced Christians who like to think they are talking tough than to the "unbelievers" to whom it is ostensi-

come across as "modest and reasonable" in such passages. Hume, who rejected miracles, is miraculously employed to account for skepticism about the uniformity of scientific laws. Points to D'Souza for rhetorical cleverness, but still...

D'Souza is, however, exhilarating when he attacks the atheists in a series of chapters on "Why Man is More Than Matter," the imperial self, the psychological appeal of atheism, and its moral poverty in the face of human suffering. Atheism, in D'Souza's mind, is "driven by base motives." It is "moral revolt. Atheists don't find God invisible so much as objectionable. They aren't adjusting their desires to the truth, but rather the truth to their desires."

Spanning the whole book is D'Souza's argument that Christianity "is the very core and center of Western civilization. Many of the best things about our world are the result of Christianity and some of the worst things are the result of its absence, or of moving away from it." It is easy to see why D'Souza goes down this path. He is defending Christianity against critics who blame it for all manner of social ills, from sexism to imperialism to genocide. But can the "greatness" of Christianity be properly said to reside in the civilization that it gave rise to? D'Souza's answer is a version of Jesus' pronouncement in the Sermon on the Mount, in which He warns about false prophets: "By their fruits you shall know them." D'Souza thinks we can judge Christianity by its fruits as well, and those include respect for human rights and human dignity, our concept of moral freedom, and basic notions of equality. He sees capitalism as one of those fruits: "Capitalism satisfied the Christian demand for an institution that channels selfish human desire toward the betterment of society."

He also claims that Christianity elevated family life above other allegiances, such as the loyalty the ancient Greek felt towards his city-state. On this point, the anthropologist in me quails. Family life is and always has been a central concern in all human societies.

SPANNING THE WHOLE BOOK IS D'SOUZA'S ARGUMENT THAT **CHRISTIANITY "IS THE VERY CORE AND CENTER OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION. MANY OF THE BEST THINGS ABOUT OUR WORLD ARE THE RESULT OF CHRISTIANITY AND SOME OF THE WORST THINGS ARE THE RESULT OF ITS ABSENCE, OR OF MOVING AWAY FROM IT."**

D'Souza scores his little victories. What about the bigger picture? The book is welcome as an intelligent reply to the current surfeit of anti-Christian polemics. American churches have acquitted themselves poorly under these attacks. We have many theologians and popular Christian writers but few who can capably address themselves to the witty nihilism and atheistic panache of our age. Christian students make do with C.S. Lewis, who died in 1963, and Lewis's writings are more than 50 years behind the current debates. I see him standing in an empty field shaking a stick at the sky, as the stealth aircraft of today's atheists whisk past.

D'Souza, therefore, supplies a need—the need of intelligent Christians who, in good conscience, are worried that the arguments Hitchens, Harris, Daniel Dennett, Richard Dawkins, Victor

bly addressed. D'Souza's words have an air of intimidation that people who are not worried about imminent dismemberment by an Iraqi IED or not gasping their last on nursing-home deathbeds would find merely annoying. Perhaps the theology is right, but the psychology is misjudged, and it reveals much about D'Souza's unevenness as a writer that the threat appears in the same paragraph as his much more powerful evocation of the secular hedonist's "joyless search for joy."

D'Souza, in choosing breadth over depth, inevitably stumbles. His three chapters on philosophy seem superficial. From Kant he takes the idea that reason has its limits, which leads him to declare, "The atheist is now revealed as dogmatic and arrogant, and the religious believer emerges as modest and reasonable." D'Souza himself doesn't exactly

But if one of D'Souza's arrows misses, he has many more. Christianity, in his view, lies at the base of our modern idea of the rule of law, since it held that "power should be very cautiously entrusted to fallible human beings." Christianity gave the West some of its notions of political accountability, through the idea of "servant leadership." (I hear Christopher Hitchens hooting in the distance, "But not the idea of the divine right of kings with no accountability?") And Christianity gave rise, says D'Souza, to "the idea of progress."

Which of these claims would stand up to objective scholarly examination? The West surely is very different from the rest of the world and provides the only example we have of Christianity working itself out in the development of society over 2,000 years. No doubt Western institutions and deep-seated cultural premises were shaped by Christian ideals, but how do we disentangle the Christian contribution from everything else: Greek and Roman legacies, pagan Celtic culture, Islamic scholarship, and so on?

This isn't a pitch for the vapid "multi-cultural" revision of Western history that has swept through the universities, but a plain hard question. Western civilization is a complicated story that, to modify D'Souza slightly, had Christianity at its core for a long stretch. Today, maybe not so much.

*What's So Great About Christianity* testifies to the insecurity of Christians who realize that contemporary Western civilization is no longer centered on Christianity. The Gospel of John tells of the apostle Thomas, who doubts the resurrection until he is able to touch Jesus' wounds. Legend has it that the chastened Thomas later took the faith to India, where he was martyred. Perhaps D'Souza is best seen as an heir of Thomas—come back from India to dispute the latter-day doubters. ■

*Peter Wood is executive director of the National Association of Scholars and the author of A Bee in the Mouth: Anger in America Now.*

[*Conservatism in America: Making Sense of the American Right*, Paul Gottfried, Palgrave Macmillan, 189 pages]

## The Right State of Mind

By Thomas E. Woods Jr.

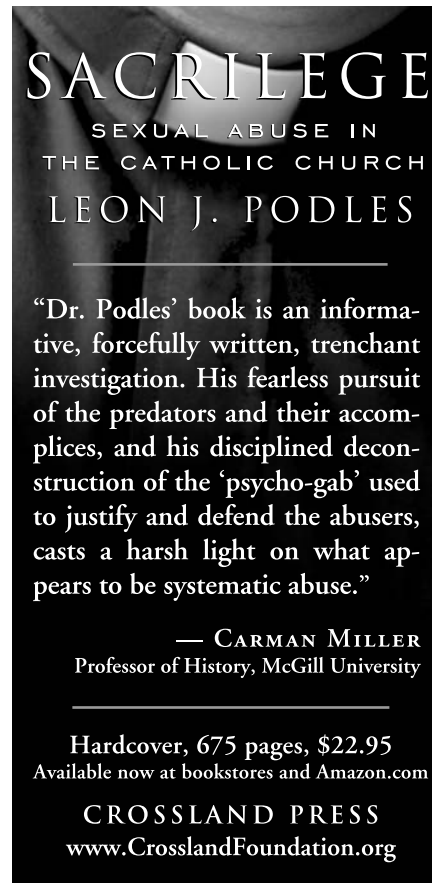
PAUL GOTTFRIED is one of the Right's more knowledgeable and trustworthy chroniclers, and his *Conservatism in America* is a learned and incisive discussion of a much misunderstood phenomenon.

Gottfried is quite a sympathizer with the subject he treats, at least in its genuine article, so I was expecting to encounter a more exasperated tone in his prose. After all, the story he tells involves all kinds of hucksters who have made fortunes mouthing conservative-sounding rhetoric—not to mention the opportunists who peddle a flatly left-wing agenda but have managed to make a following for themselves among a dumbed-down conservative base that wouldn't know traditional conservatism if it punched them in the face. Gottfried may have too much contempt for these people to let them get under his skin.

From the beginning of the organized conservative movement, the official Right suffered from confusion over its identity. In Gottfried's view, it was a mistake for Russell Kirk and the American Right to link themselves to an older European conservatism. As the Right began to coalesce in the 1930s in response to Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal, it was coming from a social and intellectual world that was vastly different from the one inhabited by Edmund Burke. They did not share his reverence for the state as a bearer of tradition and guarantor of order; much less were they the intellectual descendants of the European counter-revolutionary tradition, for which the state could play a positive part in restoring the traditional social orders following the revolutionary

upheaval of 1789 and beyond. Frank Meyer criticized Kirk on something like these grounds at the time, wondering why a philosophy born of reverence of a 18th-century monarchical regime should be called upon in defense of a 20th-century welfare state.

Although Gottfried does not mean to suggest that Kirk would have been ashamed of the humble and bourgeois social base of the American Right, he does point out that devising a European lineage for American conservatism was "far more pleasurable than having to trace one's political traditionalism to the small-town dissenters, nonconformist isolationists and bohemian litterateurs who had made up the anti-New Deal Right." For the then emerging conservative movement, receiving an Old World genealogy was "like picking up a baron's title in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. It was a nice thing that hurt nobody but brought those looking for social status a needed lift."



**SACRILEGE**  
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One of the unfortunate byproducts of this tie to European conservatism was that the American movement sometimes lacked the hard-headed realism about the state that 20th-century America obviously needed. The canon of conservative values that Kirk and others pointed to “concealed an indifference to state power,” says Gottfried, who agrees with Murray Rothbard’s criticism that by the mid-1950s and the rise of an official conservatism, the movement (in Gottfried’s words) “had evolved into a tool of state aggrandizement.”

Few writers have a better grasp of the neoconservative phenomenon than Paul Gottfried. And readers will not be surprised to learn that the neoconservatives do not fare well at his hands. The neoconservatives are simply phony, having consistently misrepresented themselves and

nam War, featured black and Jewish writers. It highlighted the black former communist George Schuyler and expelled Revilo Oliver, the pro-Nazi classicist.

Robert Taft, moreover, had a Jewish campaign manager, under whose influence the senator became a convinced Zionist. Taft’s victory in a close Senate race in 1944 was largely attributable to the Jewish Democrats in and around Cleveland who crossed party lines to vote for him. Among the reasons that Taft opposed appropriations bills for the southern states was his concern that blacks were not being given equal public facilities.

Neoconservatives often cite McCarthyism as a difference between themselves and the Old Right. Neoconservatives, the argument goes, had a far too acute sense of justice not to be opposed to McCarthy.

**WHEN NEOCONSERVATIVES ACKNOWLEDGE THE EXISTENCE OF AN EARLIER RIGHT, THEY DO SO TO CONDEMN THOSE WHO BELONGED TO IT FOR THEIR INSENSITIVITY AND TO CONGRATULATE THEMSELVES ON THEIR OWN MORAL SUPERIORITY.**

the history of the conservative movement. On the rare occasions when neoconservatives acknowledge the existence of an earlier Right, they do so to condemn those who belonged to it for their insensitivity on (among other things) racial matters and to congratulate themselves on their own moral superiority.

Gottfried will have none of this. He reminds us of Harry Jaffa’s bitter denunciation of Martin Luther King in the pages of *National Review* in September 1968, as well as Norman Podhoretz’s 1963 article “My Negro Problem—And Ours.” There Podhoretz wrote about his “hatred” for blacks, the “disgusting prurience that stirs in me at the sight of a mixed couple,” and “the violence that can stir in me whenever I encounter the special brand of paranoid touchiness to which many Negroes are prone.”

Furthermore, the Old Right was not as wicked as the neoconservative caricature suggests. The John Birch Society, which was tolerated until it opposed the Viet-

Again, as Gottfried shows, the reality is rather different: by and large the early neoconservatives, Irving Kristol among them, did not particularly care about McCarthyism one way or the other. Gottfried argues that the various forms of the Right have erred in identifying the objectionable aspect of leftism as its “moral relativism.” On the contrary, what the Left has advocated is not relativism or the denial of moral values, but rather the imposition of a competing set of absolutes: “Here and in Europe, [the Left] showcases one ‘value’ after another, be it cultural diversity; preferential treatment for non-Western peoples and religions as the historic victims of Western injustice; social equality; or reproductive freedom for women.” The Left has been trying, with much success, to impose its own moral vision on American society. This is not the same as relativism, and the Right has blunted the effectiveness of its response by mischaracterizing what is going on.

Conservative values themselves, for all their “permanence,” have in fact drifted with the times. This process can sometimes be rather amusing: the very same conservative publications that raised all kinds of criticisms when a national holiday was named after Martin Luther King were commenting 20 years later what a deeply conservative Christian theologian he was. And while it is possible for supporters of abortion and gay marriage to become stars in the conservative movement, social conservatives who criticize an American democratic mission to the Middle East will have much more difficulty.

Gottfried cites an August 2005 speech by the *New York Times* columnist David Brooks, who is generally considered a conservative, before a Republican-friendly audience at the American Political Association. Brooks did not seem to disconcert his listeners when he said Republicans should place more emphasis on social equality, taking inspiration from Hillary Clinton. But had Brooks called for the immediate withdrawal of troops from Iraq, says Gottfried, or called for a more even-handed treatment of the Israeli-Palestinian dispute, he would surely have “lost his movement conservative standing.”

The establishment Right, in fact, is at pains in its conflicts with the Left to prove that it can more effectively implement the ideal of equality. The supposedly profound disagreements that separate the establishment Right and Left are merely “duels fought out among the would-be implementers of already agreed-on values.”

Jaffa and his followers, for instance, have transformed democratic equality into the highest conservative value and have reinterpreted American history accordingly, apportioning heroism and villainy according to how strongly a given figure supported or opposed this transcendent principle. One of the benefits of promoting democratic equality is that since the idea originated on the Left, trumpeting it does not get one written out of polite society. Jaffa’s followers may quibble with the Left over exactly



what Abraham Lincoln or Martin Luther King meant by the idea, but they at least agree on universal equality as a self-evident desideratum.

A possible reply to Gottfried's arguments is to concede that the neoconservatives have indeed transformed conservatism beyond what its architects would recognize but then to claim that political realism demanded such changes. Direct assaults on, say, antidiscrimination law or the welfare state were not going to win elections. With the American population moving leftward, conservatism's political arm needed to prune its demands and be satisfied with more modest goals.

But Gottfried anticipates this objection and deals with it convincingly. It is one thing, he says, to make prudent adjustments in light of political imperatives, quite another to believe that those changes are morally correct, as neoconservatives clearly do. It is not strategic reasons that propel the neoconservative juggernaut; the neoconservatives have different priorities and do not think the way older conservatives did.

Suppose American public opinion should shift decisively against the neoconservatives' stance on the Middle East. Can we imagine them merely adjusting their view in light of prudence, as many of them did on gay marriage, or would they not instead fight back with everything they have?

In the neoconservative world that now dominates the Right, the "values" rhetoric serves as window dressing for the Republican Party. Once the rubes have been propagandized into believing that patriotism requires them to support this year's GOP clone, the neoconservative establishment can proceed to betray anyone and anything in order to get what it really wants. They believe in conservative "values," all right, but some values are more equal than others. ■

*Thomas E. Woods Jr. is an author and senior fellow at the Ludwig von Mises Institute. His latest book is 33 Questions About American History You're Not Supposed to Ask.*

[*A Nation of Sheep*, Andrew P. Napolitano, Thomas Nelson, 256 pages]

## The Fleecing of America

By Kevin R.C. Gutzman

ANDREW NAPOLITANO is mad as hell, and he's not going to take it anymore. He thinks that the U.S. government has lost all respect for Americans' rights, and he laments that the average citizen accepts the curtailment of traditional liberties. His latest book is a jeremiad about American government—and one without a very hopeful prognosis.

This may come as a surprise to those familiar with Napolitano's employer, FoxNews. His fellow talking heads on that network usually defend the Bush administration against every charge, from incompetence to prevarication to mendacity. Not Napolitano.

In his previous books, the former judge turned legal pundit lamented the extent to which the federal government has gone off the rails of limited government. As he explained it in *Constitutional Chaos* and *The Constitution in Exile*, not much remains of the U.S. Constitution beyond its form.

In this book, Napolitano gives credit where credit is due: to the lovers of sports, video games, and empty celebrity who allow government officials to fleece them of their rights without so much as a bleat of protest. In 15 pithy chapters, he lays out his theory of rights and his understanding of where the American tradition of individualism stands.

In general, it is a powerful book, though it has weaknesses. For one, Napolitano believes that all of our rights are God-given. He denies that any of them can be based on history. Grounding rights in history, he fears, leads to a form of legal positivism—the idea that rights are what the law says they are.

Here Napolitano has a real problem.

Take, for example, the right to trial by jury in criminal cases. This was a historic right of Englishmen, one the American Revolution meant to vindicate. Yet how can one say that the right to trial by a jury of 12 men of the vicinage, with all of its historical incidents, is a God-given right? Is there some abstract, natural feature of the number 12, or of the English idea of the vicinage (the neighborhood), that God ordained? Is the English institution of the jury, absent from civil law systems such as France or Germany's, one to which man has a divine right? Clearly not. Trial by jury is a historic right, not a God-given one. Rather than considering this difficulty, Napolitano simply assumes throughout *A Nation of Sheep* that all rights are appointed in the heavens.

This belief is based on the author's mistaken idea that the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution are "our country's founding documents." But nothing was founded on the Declaration, which simply declared what was already a reality: that the United States were independent.

In fact, by the time the Declaration was promulgated, Virginia had already had a permanent, republican government for five days. If Thomas Jefferson, for one, had thought that the Declaration was a founding document, he would not have begged Virginia's rulers in the weeks before July 4, 1776 to relieve him of his congressional post so that he could return to the Old Dominion and help draft republican Virginia's founding document: the Virginia Constitution of 1776.

Still less was the federal Constitution a "founding document." It presumes throughout that several states already exist and are already independent—have already been founded. It would have been more difficult for Napolitano to familiarize himself with the 13 state foundings than to simply assume, as he does, that the Declaration and Constitution were founding documents, but that is what he should have done.

That is a very common and somewhat forgivable mistake. Less excusable are

Napolitano's claims that Thomas Jefferson was an author of the Bill of Rights and that the United States was "a British colony."

Despite his faulty predicate, Napolitano is spot-on in his lengthy criticisms of the federal government and the American citizenry. His introductory chapter, "Where Does Freedom Come From?" includes wonderful insights. For example, he notes, "We vote carelessly and acquiesce to impeachable offenses, allowing the government to quash our liberties and ignore our rights."

Napolitano is right: many federal officials deserve impeachment for violating the Constitution. He goes on to detail myriad ways in which the federal government has deprived us of our accustomed liberties. "It is my hope and purpose in writing this book," he explains, "that the good folks who read it will recognize that the government is not our friend, that the gravest dangers to our freedoms lie hidden in a government that has seized them from us, and that vigilance and adherence to natural law can save us from the power-hungry bureaucrats who run the government today."

In his next chapter, Napolitano pinpoints the chief problem in American government today: while "wolves" keep close watch on government officials and are protective of their own liberties, "unfortunately, the majority of Americans are sheep." In the post-Sept. 11 world, we allow federal officials to subvert the Constitution in the name of protecting America.

Many of the measures taken to "protect" the citizenry are absurd. For example, in the wake of a deranged bomber's attempt to blow up a plane with a bomb in his shoe, federal officials instituted a requirement that every air passenger submit to having his shoes checked. Practical utility: approaching zero. Relationship to traditional requirements that probable cause exist and a warrant be secured before an individual can be searched by a government official: none. Americans' response: passive obedience.

Sadly, historical errors frequently undercut the strength of Napolitano's righteous indignation. He claims that the Fourth Amendment bans New York Police Department officers from searching the bags of subway passengers, without appreciating that the Bill of Rights was intended as a limitation only on the federal government. Curiously, Napolitano becomes a sheep himself before the overreaching of federal judges who have falsely claimed a right to enforce some of the Bill of Rights against state and local officials. He repeats this error.

Other claims seem entirely unsound. Napolitano dislikes HandESCan, the security device that Busch Gardens and Water Country USA now use to identify visitors to their parks. This, he says, is "valuable private information." Why is it private? How is it related to the threat of oppressive government? These questions do not receive clear answers. At many points, Napolitano simply riffs on matters he finds irksome, despite their attenuated relationship to his theme.

Napolitano is right to complain about the violation of the presumption of innocence represented by the assumption that photographs taken by automated cameras in stoplights are accurate indications of guilt. Yet people accept the growing prevalence of these mechanisms in urban areas. "The burden," he notes plaintively, "is now on you to prove that you are innocent."

The most striking sections of the book by far are those dealing with post-9/11 security measures. The federal government's behavior in this regard has been nothing short of lawless.

Under the cover of the "state secrets" doctrine, federal judges allow executive branch officials broad latitude to do whatever they choose in the war on terror. The result is the retrenchment of Americans' hard-won historic rights.

Napolitano's chapter on airport security is one long expression of outrage. The infamous case of the mother accosted for taking her child's sippy cup to an airport is recounted, as is the prosecution of the North Carolina college

student who exposed the futility of TSA scanning for bombs. Ted Kennedy's experience of being on the "No Fly" list (the seven-term senator was considered a terror suspect) seems at once poetic and imbecilic. And the revolting unfairness of a government innovation that enables celebrities, rich businessmen, and government officials to pay their way around security checks seems tailor-made for a bit of populist political exploitation, if only some candidate had the fortitude to take advantage of it.

The most shocking chapter of *A Nation of Sheep* is Chapter 12, "The Corpse of Habeas." In less than a dozen pages, Napolitano describes the experiences of numerous people arbitrarily and indefinitely arrested since Sept. 11. The Military Commissions Act of 2006, which grants the president and his men the right to arrest and indefinitely imprison suspects without legitimate charges and deny them access to a proper legal defense is particularly outrageous—not to mention the fact that even if acquitted, people arrested under this law can be retried, despite the Constitution's double jeopardy prohibition.

George III had nothing like the arbitrary power over Americans now wielded by George Bush II.

Napolitano's tales of foreigners arrested as enemy combatants on the flimsiest grounds, then held for months or years incommunicado before being ultimately found completely innocent, will make readers blanch. And that leaves aside what Napolitano says about the torture policy of the Bush administration. Besides physical torture, one common and barbaric interrogation tactic in the war on terror, according to Napolitano, is to tell suspects that if they fail to co-operate, Americans will rape their wives.

It is a grim picture. Very grim. Napolitano is to be applauded for his effort to educate his compatriots and rouse the sheep from their cheerful existence. ■

*Kevin R.C. Gutzman is the author of The Politically Incorrect Guide to the Constitution.*

# Election Fraud

The United States, I submit, is not a democracy—by which is meant a system in which the will of the people dominates. Rather it is a curious mechanism artfully

designed to circumvent the will of the people while appearing to be democratic. Several mechanisms accomplish this.

First, we have two identical parties which, when elected, do very much the same things. Thus the election determines not policy but only the division of spoils. Nothing really changes. The Democrats will never seriously reduce military spending nor the Republicans entitlements.

Second, the two parties determine on which questions we are allowed to vote. They simply refuse to engage the questions that matter most to many people. If you are against affirmative action, for whom do you vote? If you regard the schools as abominations?

Third, there is the effect of large jurisdictions. Suppose you live in a very small school district and don't like the curriculum. You can buttonhole the head of the school board, whom you probably know, and say, "Look, Jack, I really think..." He will listen.

But suppose you live in a suburban jurisdiction of 300,000. You as an individual mean nothing. To affect policy, you would have to form an organization, canvass for votes, solicit contributions, and place ads in newspapers. This is a full-time job, prohibitively burdensome. The larger the jurisdiction, the harder it is to exert influence. Much policy is set at the state level. Now you need a statewide campaign to change the curriculum. Practically speaking, it isn't practical.

Fourth, impenetrable bureaucracies. A lot of policy is set by making regula-

tions at some department or other, often federal. How do you call the Department of Education to protest a rule that is in fact a policy? The department has thousands of telephones, few of them listed, all of which will brush you off. There is nothing the public can do to influence. So you write to your senator—and get a letter written by a computer, "I thank you for your valuable insights and assure you that I am doing all..."

Fifth is the invisible bureaucracy, which is also impenetrable. Huge portions of government get no attention from the press—HUD, for example. Nobody knows who the secretary of housing and urban development is or what the department is doing.

Similarly, the textbook publishers have some committee whose name I don't remember—See? It works—that decides what words can be used in texts, how women and Indians must be portrayed, what can be said about them, and so on. Such a group amounts to an unelected ministry of propaganda, and, almost certainly, you have never heard of it.

Sixth, and a bit more subtle, is the lack of centers of demographic power in competition with the official government. The Catholic Church, for example, once influentially represented a large part of the population. It has been brought to heel. We are left with government by lobbies—the weapons industry, Big Pharma, AIPAC, the teachers unions—whose representatives pay Congress to do things against the public interest.

Finally, there is the press, which

decides what the public will be allowed to know. Unless you spend time outside of America, you may not realize to what extent the media is controlled. The press is largely free, yes, but it is also largely owned by a small number of corporations which, in turn, are run by people from the same pool from which are drawn high-level pols and their advisers. They are rich people who know each other and have the same interests. We are ruled not by a government but by a class. It is very nearly correct to say that these people are the government of the United States and the federal apparatus merely a useful theatrical manifestation.

To disguise all of this, elections provide the excitement and approximate intellectual content of a football game, without the importance. They allow a sense of Participation. In bars across the land and high-school gyms turned forums, people become heated about what they imagine to be decisions of great import: this candidate or that? It keeps them from feeling left out while withholding power.

It is fraud. In a sense, the candidates do not even exist. A presidential candidate consists of two speechwriters, a make-up man, gestures coach, ad agency, two pollsters, and an interpreter of focus groups. Depending on his numbers, the handlers may suggest a more fixed stare to crank up his decisiveness quotient or dial in a bit of compassion for another audience. The newspapers will report this calculated transformation. Yet it works. You can fool enough of the people enough of the time.

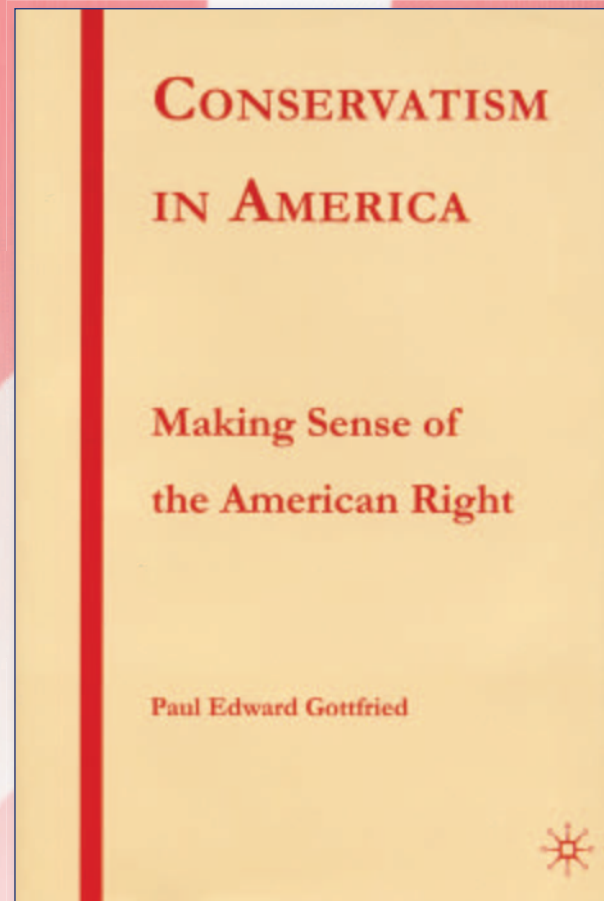
When they sense this and decline to vote, we cluck like disturbed hens and speak of apathy. Nope. Just common sense. ■

**“A must read for students of American conservatism.”**

—Peter Brimelow, Editor, VDARE.COM

**“Paul Gottfried... poses the painful questions that others flee from and offers interpretations that compel close attention from all who wish to understand the prospects for a conservative movement.”**

—Eugene D. Genovese, author of  
*The Southern Tradition: The Achievement and Limitations of an American Conservatism*



**I**n this important book, Paul Edward Gottfried gives a fascinating account of the American conservative movement, arguing that it has been largely an invention of journalists and Republican activists. He shows how the movement has exaggerated the permanence of its values, and how both its instilled anti-Communism and its rejection of dissent have sapped its capacity for internal debate. Movement conservatives, who work disproportionately for Beltway publications and policy institutes, do not have a real social base. Their movement came to power partly by burying an older, anti-welfare state Right that had in fact enjoyed a social following concentrated in small town America. The newcomers played down the merits of those they had replaced and in the 1980's the neoconservatives, who took over the postwar conservative movement from an earlier generation, belittled their predecessors in a similar way. Among the movement's major accomplishments has been a recreation of its own past. The success of this revised history lies in the fact that even the movement's critics are now inclined to accept it.